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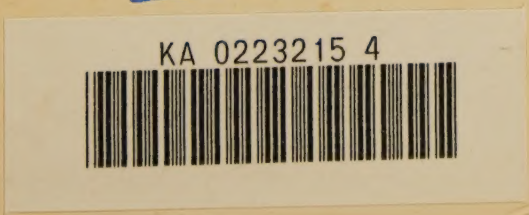

LETTERS OF

HORACE WALPOLE

MRS. PAGET TOYNBEE

HENRY FROWDE, M.A.
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
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Horace Walpole and Hon.ble Mrs Damer
from a painting by Angelica Kauffmann.

THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

FOURTH EARL OF ORFORD

CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED

AND EDITED WITH NOTES AND INDICES

BY

MRS. PAGET TOYNBEE

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES

WITH PORTRAITS AND FACSIMILES

VOL. X: 1777—1779

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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1897	[Oct. 1778]	Earl Harcourt	1765
1898	[Oct. 1778]	Earl Harcourt	1764
1899	Oct. 11, 1778.	Rev. William Mason.	1768
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1938	April 23, 1779 . .	Rev. William Cole . . .	1809
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† Now printed for the first time.

T			C
1940	Thursday [May 6, 1779]	Countess of Upper Ossory	Part of 1692
1941	May 9, 1779 . . .	Sir Horace Mann . . .	1812
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1943	May 22, 1779 . .	Hon. Henry Seymour Conway	1814
1944	May 29, 1779 . .	Sir Horace Mann . . .	1815
1945	June 2, 1779. . .	Rev. William Cole . . .	1816
1946	June 4, 1779. . .	Dr. Lort.	1817
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1948	June 16, 1779 . .	Hon. Henry Seymour Conway	1819
1949	June 16, 1779 . .	Sir Horace Mann . . .	1820
1950†	June 19, 1779 . .	Sir Horace Mann.	
1951	June 22, 1779 . .	Countess of Upper Ossory .	1821
1952	June 30, 1779 . .	Sir Horace Mann . . .	1822
1953	July 4, 1779. . .	George Hardinge . . .	1823
1954	July 5, 1779. . .	George Augustus Selwyn .	1824
1955	July 6, 1779 . . .	Countess of Upper Ossory .	1825
1956	July 7, 1779 . . .	Sir Horace Mann . . .	1826
1957	July 10, 1779 . .	Countess of Ailesbury . .	1827
1958	July 12, 1779 . .	Rev. William Cole . . .	1828
1959	July 14, 1779 . .	Countess of Upper Ossory .	1829
1960	Friday night [1779] .	Countess of Ailesbury . .	1836

† Now printed for the first time.

THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

1743. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Arlington Street, Jan. 1, 1777.

If pain and total helplessness are illness, I was, indeed, very bad, my dear Madam, when I dispatched my last note to Ampthill. I think my disorder had its crisis on Sunday. By the help of quieting draughts, I have had three good nights since, and not much pain. As I feel no new attack anywhere else, I begin to venture to flatter myself that my feet will escape; and for my hands, they must wait for the pity of the weather before they can recover. I should not have said so much on myself, but to excuse my having said so little in gratitude for your Ladyship's letters.

Till Monday, I was able to see nobody at all, and now that I should be glad to see a few, there is not a soul in town to come. Mr. Gibbon, who called yesterday, is gone to Sussex to-day for a fortnight. I told him I could not conceive how anybody that has not the gout, and might go to Ampthill, could go anywhere else.

Lady Paine[1], who called here last Friday night with Lady Lucan, when I was not able to receive them, was taken ill that very night, and has been in great danger ever since:

Letter 1743.—[1] Frances, daughter of Henry, Baron Kolbel of the Holy Roman Empire; m. (1767) Ralph Payne, afterwards K.B., and first Baron Lavington; d. 1830.

the message this morning is a little more favourable; everybody that knows her must be in great pain for her. I am in hopes George[2] will arrive from Bath to-night, and the Beauclerks in about a week. If I have no return, I shall be able, probably, in some few days, to write a line or two with my own hand, and be in better spirits, which are not quite recovered yet.

1744. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

January 7, 1777.

I BEGIN a letter, Madam, long before it will get into its chaise, because being as slow an operation as engraving, I must take due time, or you will arrive in town before it sets out. That I am at all recovered is a prodigy in such weather: perhaps the gout is frozen, and my pains may return on a thaw. At present I am tolerably free, but still have a bootikin on each hand, and write with a bear's paw.

I saw long ago the passage your Ladyship took the trouble to transcribe. To be cited so honourably by Voltaire would be flattering, indeed, if he had not out of envy taken pains to depreciate all the really great authors of his own country, and of this; and what sort of judgement is that which decries Shakespeare and commends *me*?

I have seen Mr. Crawfurd twice, which I think a great deal, considering how little he can be entertained here, and that he is sure I will join him in no Io Pæans. In truth, I know there is a great deal of water mixed with the wine of all the late bumpers; nay, I believe, echo will still drink her glass.

January 8.

I have just got an account of Lord Villiers's play[1]. It

[2] George Selwyn.

LETTER 1744.—[1] *The Provoked Husband* and *Pygmalion* (by Rousseau), performed at Bolney Court near

went off to admiration; and Le Texier, which, I believe, was inimitable. Indeed, considering what an Iceland night it was, I concluded the company and audience would all be brought to town in waggons petrified, and stowed in a statuary's yard in Piccadilly. Has your Ladyship dipped into Mr. Ayscough's[2] *Semiramis*? Read it you could not; it is the very worst of all our late trash. Mr. Colman says it is Voltaire 'a-scue'—I know not how to spell that word. My poor head will not let me say any more, and news I know none.

1745. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

January 15, 1777.

An invalid's room is commonly a coffee-house, and as I know no news, I must suppose there is none. Indeed, the town is so empty, that my circles have been small; but then there are so few of those I wish to see in town, that I have asked nobody, but trusted to chance customers. My right hand is still a good deal swelled, and has not yet moulted its covering. Loyalty and love of dress will bring up the world by Saturday. When will anything bring your Ladyship and Lord Ossory? Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Fox were to leave Paris last Sunday; perhaps they may wait to see the Emperor[1].

Sir Ralph Paine made me a visit t'other day, and not knowing what to say to him, I asked him how he liked his new house in Grafton Street; he replied, its *centricality* made it very agreeable.

It is scarce decent to send such a scrap as a letter, but

Henley-on-Thames by Lord Villiers and other amateurs. For a full account of the performances see *Passages from the Diaries of Mrs. Powys*, pp. 178–94.

[2] George Edward Ayscough (d. 1779), son of Dr. Francis Ayscough, Dean of Bristol, and first cousin of second Baron Lyttelton.

Letter 1745.—[1] Joseph II, who visited Paris this year, travelling as Count von Falkenstein.

I protest I have nothing to add to it. I am so glad to be able to move my fingers again, that I should be proud to fill a sheet. Your Ladyship, I know, will excuse me, and take me as I happen. In any case, I shall rejoice to exchange seeing you for writing.

P.S. I have a charming story about Madame du Deffand and Dr. Franklin, that will divert your Ladyship, but I have neither time nor fingers for it now.

1746. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Sunday, January 19, 1777.

You may imagine, Madam, how much I was touched with Lady Anne's[1] sensibility for me! and to give you some proof of mine, the very next reflection was, that I was sorry she promises to have so much. It is one of those virtues, whose kingdom is not of this world, but, like patience, is for ever tried, with the greater disadvantage of wanting power to remedy half the misfortunes it feels for. Sensibility is one of the master-springs, on which most depends the colour of our lives, and determines our being happy or miserable. I have often said that this world is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel; and sensibility has not only occasion to suffer for others, but is sure of its own portion too. Had I children, and the option of bestowing dispositions on them, I should be strangely puzzled to decide. Could one refuse them feelings that make them amiable, or confer what ensures unhappiness? But indeed on what could one decide, were the fate of others or one's own left to our arbitrement?

I have no opinion of my own wisdom, and little of any-

Letter 1746.—[1] Lady Anne Fitzpatrick, daughter of Lord and Lady Ossory.

body's else; but I have an odd system, that what is called *chance* is the instrument of Providence and the secret agent that counteracts what men call wisdom, and preserves order and regularity, and continuation in the whole; for you must know, Madam, that I firmly believe, notwithstanding all our complaints, that almost every person upon earth tastes upon the totality more happiness than misery; and therefore, if we could correct the world to our fancies, and with the best intentions imaginable, probably we should only produce more misery and confusion. This totally contradicts what I said before, that sensibility or insensibility determines the complexion of our lives; and yet if the former casts a predominating shade of sadness over the general tenor of our feelings, still that gloom is illumined with delicious flashes. It enjoys the comforts of the compassion it bestows, and of the misfortune it relieves; and the largest dose of the apathy of insensibility can never give any notion of the transport that thrills through the nerves of benevolence when it consoles the anguish of another; but I am too much a sceptic to pretend to make or reconcile a system and its contradictions. *No* man was ever yet so great as to build that system in which other men could not discover flaws. All our reasoning, therefore, is very imperfect, and this is *my* reason for being so seldom serious, and for never disputing. I look upon human reason as I do on the parts of a promising child—it surprises, may improve or stop short, but is not come to maturity; and therefore, if you please, I will talk of the Birthday, and things more suited to my capacity.

I had a shining circle on the evening of that great solemnity; the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, Lady Pembroke, Lady Strafford, Mr. Conway, and Lady Ailesbury, in all their gorgeous attire. Lady Warwick, I hear, looked charmingly: but pray, Madam, must you, to possess Miss

Vernon to the last minute, lock her and yourself up in the country? You make no answer to my question of when you come. I can allow you but one week more. I propose to take the air on Thursday and Friday, to air myself at Strawberry on Saturday and Sunday, and be ready on the Monday to wait on you in Grosvenor Place.

Lord Dillon told me this morning that Lord Besborough and he, playing at quinze t'other night with Miss Pelham, and happening to laugh, she flew into a passion and said, 'It was terrible to play with *boys*!'—'and our two ages together,' said Lord Dillon, 'make up above a hundred and forty.'

Sir George Warren lost his diamond order in the Council Chamber at the Birthday in the crowd of loyal subjects. Part of Georgia is said to be returned to its allegiance to King George and Lord George[2]. Charles Fox, I just hear, is arrived, and, I conclude, Mr. Fitzpatrick. My awkward hand has made a thousand blots, but I cannot help it.

Sunday night.

Mr. Fitzpatrick is not come; but I hope, what I hear is not true, that he is going to America.

Monday.

A person has just been here, and told me terrible news: an express is come that yesterday morning all Bristol was in flames[3], and that Elliot's Horse is sent thither! How dreadful! This comes of teaching the Americans to burn towns! It will be a blessed war before it is over.

[2] Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

[3] The fires which broke out at Bristol on and after Jan. 16, 1777, were the work of an incendiary, James Aitken (1752–1777), known as 'John the Painter.' He set fire to the rope-house in Portsmouth Dockyard in Dec. 1776. He tried to destroy the shipping and city of Bristol, but only succeeded in burning some warehouses. Aitken was tried and executed in the following March.

1747. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Jan. 24, 1777.

In my last, a month ago, I told you I had the gout. It is now gone, and I have been once out to take the air. As I love to make the best of everything, I call this a short and favourable fit, having, from its first moment to my airing, lasted *but* six weeks; and, though I had it in both hands, wrists, and elbows, there was not much pain for above thirty hours; and my feet escaped. These *douceurs* I attribute to the bootikins. It is true that, for these last three years, the fits have been annual, instead of biennial; but if they are split into more frequent, though much shorter portions, I must still be satisfied; for could *I* go through five months and a half of pain? I am already so shattered with these attacks, that my nerves are as alarmable as the sensitive-plant. The clapping of a door suddenly makes me start and tremble; and yet I don't find my spirits affected. In fact, my inside is so strong, and the case so very weak, that I believe the cottage will tumble down, and I shall have nothing but the inside left. I am thinking of going to Bath or to the seaside, which has often been of service; not, to say the truth, that I suppose it will, but one is to try, and to pretend to suppose it will. Old people always talk as if they expected cures—but surely they cannot; surely they cannot forget how they used to laugh at the seniors who had such idle hopes! But enough, and too much of myself.

The tide of victories continues: Fort Washington was taken at the end of the year[1], and Rhode Island since. A great deal is still to do, and not much less if the war was over. It does not appear yet that Dr. Franklin has per-

Letter 1747.—[1] On Nov. 16, 1776.

suaded France to espouse America openly. One hears a great deal of underhand support, and in general the disposition of the French is for war with us; but I never believe but on facts, seldom reports, and seldomer prophecies and conjectures; chance being the great mistress of human affairs in the *dernier ressort.*

The Parliament is met, but, as the opposition does not attend, for these last two days they could not get a House of one hundred members; which is necessary, since Mr. Grenville's bill, if an election is to be heard. We were alarmed on Sunday with an account of Bristol being in flames, and of several attempts to fire that city and Portsmouth. It turns out almost nothing at all, and not above the pitch of insurers. There was a silly story of two new-invented engines for firing being found in the lodgings of the supposed incendiary, together with an account of the St. Barthélemi and Dr. Price's [2] pamphlet for the Americans. If true, it indicated a madman.

Your lord paramount, the Emperor, is coming to Paris: he does not come hither—he needs not. We have transplanted the flowers of our follies thither—horse-racing and gaming; and our chief missionaries preside over the rites. My poor hand is so weak that you must dispense with my writing you no longer a letter. For eight days I underwent the humiliation of being fed; and, when one comes to one's pap again, no wonder one thinks oneself ancient. Adieu!

[2] Richard Price, D.D. (1723–1791), a Dissenting minister. The pamphlet in question was *Observations on Civil Liberty and the Justice and Policy of the War with America*, published in 1776. It is stated 'that the encouragement derived from this book had no inconsiderable share in determining the Americans to declare their independence.' (*D. N. B.*)

1748. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

January 26, 1777.

Give me leave to say your Ladyship quite misunderstood one paragraph in my last. Never was anything farther from my thoughts than to accuse you of keeping your sisters too long in the country. Where upon earth could they be so well as under your care? Who would take such care of them? Who would educate and form them so well? Where could they lead so rational and at the same time so agreeable a life? And where would they be farther from seeing or hearing anything that would pervert their minds? And pray where could they be witnesses to more sensible felicity? Do you imagine, Madam, that I think it necessary that they should be married at fifteen in order to enlarge the circle of some Machiavelian aunt's political influence? Indeed, I had no such idea; and, begging the pardon of the young ladies, they were not concerned in my question.

It was your Ladyship was my object: I meant to ask if you intended to stay at Ampthill as long as you could keep Miss Vernon there. With all the encomiums you shower on me, it is plain I do not express myself intelligibly. As to sensible letters, I will never write one. I declare I don't know what is sense, and what not. I have lived to doubt whether I have any one just and right idea about anything. Nothing I thought truth and sense from my infancy seems any longer to be so. All the virtues that were crowned with palms in Greek, Roman, and English story pass for errors. I thought that liberty, for which England has struggled and fought for seven hundred years, was natural and dear to Englishmen. No such thing. I have seen a popish rebellion crushed in Scotland, and half England

enraged at the Duke of Cumberland for saving them from chains. I now see all England exulting on every defeat of their own countrymen, who are fighting for our liberty as well as their own; and can I think I have any sense? Ought not I to believe that Mr. Locke was an old woman, and that we ought to say in our political litany as we do in our religious, 'Thy service is perfect freedom'! No, Madam, no: I have done with sense, though too old to learn the folly in fashion. I have often been of opinion that it was not designed we should be able to distinguish certainly *what is truth.* Pilate asked the person most likely to resolve him; and received no answer. I will therefore wait with patience; it will not be such a vast while, till the time that our doubts will be cleared up. Till then, pray allow me to stick to my old-fashioned nonsense; for though the sense of the age is so much improved, I don't think its nonsense is; and, besides, it is more becoming to an old man to dote in his own way, than to adopt the follies of a much more recent generation, which never sit well upon him,—at least they would not on me. I do not say that there are not old gentlemen that can cast their skins, and come out at three-score as sleek as Adonis. Lord George Germaine can look as well as Alexander, in laurels gathered by proxy, or rather like Queen Eleanor[1], could sink at Charing Cross, and rise at *King*-Hithe. I am no such didapper[2]; and if it is only for the singularity, will die as I lived with all my old errors and prejudices about me.

Lord Ossory has been exceedingly charitable, though I was an errant beggar, for I put off my frisk to Strawberry for two days on purpose to see more of him. I tell your Ladyship nothing, for he will tell you all—if there is anything, which is more than I know. I send you some

LETTER 1748.—[1] See note on letter to Montagu of Nov. 8, 1759. [2] A small diving water-fowl; a dabchick.

French books by him for the remainder of your solitude. I am sorry to quit mine, though latterly I have had company enough; but it is comfortable to sit at home, and see as many as one wishes; and still more comfortable *just now*, to see very few of those one dislikes. In short, not to be often wished joy of what one is very sorry for! and, alas! I am too old to go to France, and find many people that love liberty, though perhaps I must go thither if I desire to preserve my own. It is very indifferent where one ends, provided one is consistent. I look with scorn and horror on change of principles: it is a proof one never had any, if interest is the alternative. If this country loses its freedom, how will the names of all those who sacrificed it be execrated by their posterity! by their posterity in chains, or in the Bastille!

P.S. I must beg to have my books again.

1749. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Feb. 6, 1777.

Your account of your brother Edward's conduct and behaviour on James's death, and his breach of promises to you and your nephew, cannot surprise me after what I unfortunately know of him. It is a story I did not mean to tell you—but since you know him too, it is not necessary to conceal it from you. Twenty years ago a very good place being vacant in the Customs under Sir Edward and me, in the place your brother then held, and you now hold for us, we appointed Mr. Challis, the next in succession, to the office—but as I had promised a place in that branch to Mr. Bentley, who being then under misfortunes could not execute it, I said Mr. Challis should pay to Mr. Bentley 100*l.* a year out of his new

place. Your brother at that time, and *very often* since, reproached me with that transaction, and asked me what I would say if ever any complaint should be made in Parliament of quartering on places? I said, 'Mr. Mann, nothing will be more ready than my answer. I am neither ashamed of what I have done, nor mean to conceal it. This will be my answer. I know quartering is wrong, and though so common, I do not excuse it—but this is my plea: I had promised a place to Mr. B., a very ingenious man, and son of the famous Dr. Bentley—but as he was in trouble and absent, it was not right to give it to him; and as I could give him no other, I did give him a single hundred a year out of it.' Judge what my astonishment was on your brother's death, when Mr. Challis came to me, and said he could not pay Mr. Bentley any longer, as the bond was payable to your brother. I said, 'What bond?' He said, 'The bond for the 250*l.* a year.' I said, 'Sir, I protest I do not understand you; you was to pay Mr. Bentley but one hundred a year.'—To be short, your brother, who had so often reproached me with the hundred, had taken that very opportunity to extort 150*l.* a year more for himself, and had, by being the person to appoint the successor at my brother's and my nomination, compelled Mr. Challis to give him E. M. a bond for 250*l.*—and had received the 150*l.* himself for twenty years. Luckily he had grown ashamed to leave evidence of such an amazing transaction, and had burnt the bond—so Mr. Challis will save the annual 150*l.*, and Mr. Bentley will have his 100*l.*, which else would have gone to your brother's children. In truth, this is a heavy lesson to me, that having done wrong in a slight instance, it produced this grievous injury to Mr. Challis—but, as I ought, though not actually to blame for that injury, I have made him a present of two thousand pounds—and I owe him the justice to say, that it was with great difficulty that

I could prevail on him to accept of that compensation—you and I have reason to say that eldest brothers are not the more equitable for the predominant share they have in the fortunes of their families.

I begin to go about again, after a confinement of seven weeks. I feel no great joy in my liberty; and, had I any excuse for bringing people to me, I should not feel concerned to live at home; for all England is a public place, and nothing so difficult to find as any private society. Everything is changed; as always must happen when one grows old, and is prejudiced to one's old ways. I do not like dining at near six, nor beginning the evening at ten at night. If one does not conform, one must live alone; and that is more disagreeable and more difficult in town than in the country, where old useless people ought to live. Unfortunately, the country does not agree with me; and I am sure it is not fancy; for my violent partiality to Strawberry Hill cannot be imposed upon. I am persuaded that it is the dampness of this climate that gives me so much gout; and London, from the number of fires and inhabitants, must be the dryest spot in the nation.

There is nothing new of any sort. As there is no opposition, there is no Parliament; I mean none that is talked of more than the Assizes. In America the campaign seems to be over. It is to be very warm next summer; but there will be a spring between of some consequence. Then will be seen what we are to expect from France. Your brother, the Emperor, has put off his journey thither: some think, rebuffed from Versailles; others, that storms are brewing in the north, or deaths[1] approaching that will open the floodgates. I but just touch these points; for I have no private intelligence from every court in Europe. I can see very little way into futurity, and when I think

LETTER 1749.—[1] Probability of the death of the King of Prussia. *Walpole.*

I do, I am commonly mistaken. That this country is stark mad in every respect, I am very clear; a death that great countries are apt to die of. I have but few years to come, have no children to leave, and therefore it is no wonder that the natural insensibility of age increases upon me, as well as the disposition to censure and to augur ill. In common life one thinks many persons dying before they do die—yet they do die too. One is still more in the right, though perhaps not so soon as one expects to be, when one foretells that such an one will kill himself by his intemperance. Some will think that, as our doctors have given us over, there is a better chance of our recovering. It is true I have no opinion of our doctors—the opposition; still I think the patient is in a most deplorable way, and, as in consumptions, he has no sense of his danger. Look you: all this may be speculation and vision; I do not trouble myself about the credit of my oracle. If I did, I could give two sides to my prophecy, and could tell you, that if things did not turn out very ill one way, they would another; and I could support my belief with an oath: but I am pretty indifferent about the matter when I cannot help it, and have no more notion of caring about what will happen ten years after I am dead, than about what will happen two hundred. We have been in an unnatural state, and swelled from a little island to an empire; but I doubt the island will not shrink just into its natural corpulency again; and there is a new field for speculation! But I am, luckily, at the end of my paper.

1750. To the Rev. William Mason.

Feb. 17, 1777.

I do not know whether you will value the execution of a promise, when the letter is observed and not the spirit. I write only because you desired it, and that I said I would;

neither the literary nor political world furnish much matter. I have read *The Goat's Beard*[1]: the lines on Charles II are very good, and there is true humour here and there; but the humour is often missed, and I think the whole much too long—it is far inferior to *Variety*. Mr. Tyrrwhit has at last published the Bristol poems. He does not give up the antiquity, yet fairly leaves everybody to ascribe them to Chatterton, if they please, which I think the internal evidence must force every one to do, unless the amazing prodigy of Chatterton's producing them should not seem a larger miracle than Rowley's and Canning's anticipation of the style of very modern poetry. Psalmanazar[2] alone seems to have surpassed the genius of Chatterton, and when that lad could perform such feats, as he certainly did, what difficulty is there in believing that Macpherson forged the cold skeleton of an epic poem, that is more insipid than *Leonidas*? Mr. Tyrrwhit seems to have dreaded drawing himself into a controversy, which joys me, who dreaded being drawn into one too.

The news from America are, as usual, difficult to be fathomed. The court denies being certain of the discomfit of the Hessians[3], yet their runners pretend that the Hessian prisoners have been retaken. It is fact that the royalists have neither yet taken Providence nor the American ships: the other side believe that Lord Cornwallis has received a check at the Jerseys. Lee[4] is certainly taken by the poltroonery of his own men, of whom he had eighteen to Colonel Harcourt's[5] fourteen. He has written a short letter

LETTER 1750.—[1] A poem by William Whitehead, founded on a fable of Phaedrus.

[2] George Psalmanazar (d. 1763), literary impostor.

[3] On Dec. 26, 1776, nine hundred Hessians were surprised by Washington at Trenton, and obliged to surrender.

[4] He was captured on Dec. 13, 1776, at White's Tavern, Basken-ridge, by a party of the 16th Light Dragoons under Colonel Harcourt.

[5] Colonel Hon. William Harcourt (1743–1830), second son of first Earl Harcourt; succeeded his brother as third Earl Harcourt in 1809; Field Marshal, 1821.

in which he himself says so, and adds, that he submits to his fate, only regretting that liberty will no longer enjoy a foot of earth.

The Habeas Corpus Bill[6], you see, has appeared, though nobody would believe it. Lord Rockingham and his ingenious band have contrived to make a more ridiculous figure by doing nothing, than they ever did by anything they attempted. They are sure of not being taken up during the suspension on the suspicion of a plot. You have seen in the papers, I suppose, that 'John the Painter[7]' is a Scot, and that he dated the conflagration at Bristol from an American merchant's house, and committed a burglary, which it is not even pretended to have been directed by the orders of the Congress.

The Landgrave of Hesse[8], on the strength of our subsidy, is gone to Rome, to make a solemn renunciation of the Protestant religion at the feet of the Pope; who ought to declare him vice-defender of the faith against the heretics and Quakers of Philadelphia.

Mr. Palgrave is in town, and so is a third inundation of snow, yet I have gone about these three weeks and had no return of my disorder. Give me as good an account of yourself.

1751. To the Rev. William Cole.

Dear Sir, Arlington Street, Feb. 20, 1777.

You are always my oracle in any antique difficulties. I have bought at Mr. Ives's sale (immensely dear) the shutters of the altar at Edmondsbury: Mr. Ives had them from Tom Martin[1], who married Peter Leneve's widow; so you see no

[6] A bill to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act with regard to the Americans.

[7] James Aitken, the incendiary. See note on letter to Lady Ossory of Jan. 19, 1777.

[8] Frederick II, Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel; d. 1785.

Letter 1751.—[1] Thomas Martin (1697–1771), lawyer and antiquary, known as 'Honest Tom Martin of Palgrave.'

shutters can be better descended on the mother's side. Next to high birth, personal merit is something: in that respect my shutters are far from defective—on the contrary, the figures on the inside are so very good, as to amaze me who could paint them here in the reign of Henry VI; they are worthy of the Bolognese school—but they have suffered in several places, though not considerably. Bonus is to repair them, under oath of only filling up the cracks, and restoring the peelings off; but without repainting or varnishing.

The possession of these boards, invaluable to me, was essential. They authenticate the sagacity of my guesses, a talent in an antiquary coequal with prophecy in a saint. On the outside is an archbishop, unchristened by the late possessors, but evidently Archbishop Kempe[2], or the same person with the prelate in my 'Marriage of Henry VI'—and you will allow, from the collateral evidence, that it must be Kempe, as I have so certainly discovered another personage in my picture. The other outside is a cardinal, called by Mr. Ives, Babington[3]; but I believe Cardinal Beaufort, *for* the lion of England stands by him, which a bastardly prince of the blood was more likely to assume than a true one. His face is not very like, nor very unlike, the same person in my picture; but this is shaven—but now comes the great point. On the inside is Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, kneeling—not only as exactly resembling mine as possible, but with the same almost bald head, and the precisely same furred robe. An apostle-like personage stands behind him, holding a golden chalice, as his R. Highness's offering, and, which is remarkable, the Duke's velvet cap of estate, with his coronet of strawberry-leaves. I used to say, to corroborate my hypothesis, that the skull of Duke Humphrey at

[2] Cardinal John Kemp or Kempe (d. 1447), Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor.

[3] Probably Cardinal Repington, Bishop of Lincoln, is meant; there was no Cardinal Babington contemporary with Kemp.

St. Alban's was very like the form of head in my picture, which argument diverted the late Lord Holland extremely—but I trust now that nobody will dispute any longer my perfect acquaintance with *all Dukes of Gloucester*.—By the way, did I ever tell you that when I published my *Historic Doubts on Richard III*, my niece's marriage not being then acknowledged, George Selwyn said he did not think *I* should have *doubted* about the Duke of Gloucester. On the inside of the other shutter is a man unknown: he is in a stable, as Joseph might be, but over him hangs a shield of arms, that are neither Joseph's nor Mary's. The colours are either black and white, or so changed as not to be distinguishable; but they are thus[4]. These are three bulls' heads (on the left of the shield). These are ducks or martlets, on the argent: but I have blotted them, and the middle quarter at bottom, which should be of six pieces, three charged and three plain, or the bearings lost, for this is the most damaged part. I conclude the person who is in red and white was the donor of the altar-piece, or a benefactor; and what I want of you is to discover him and his arms; and to tell me whether Duke Humphrey, Beaufort, Kempe, and Babington were connected with St. Edmundsbury, or whether this unknown person was not a retainer of Duke Humphrey, at least of the royal family.

At the same sale I bought a curious pane, that I conclude came from Blickling, with Hobart impaling Boleyn, from which latter family the former enjoyed that seat.

How does this third winter of the season agree with you? The wind to-day is sharper than a razor, and blows icicles into one's eyes. I was confined for seven weeks with the gout, yet am so well recovered as to have been abroad to-day, though it is as mild under the pole.

Pray can you tell me the title of the book that Mr. Ives

[4] The original letter contains a drawing of arms.

dedicated to me? I never saw it, for he was so odd (I cannot call it modest, lest I should seem not so myself) as never to send it to me, and I never could get it.

Yours most truly,

H. W.

1752. To the Rev. William Cole.

February 27, 1777.

You see, dear Sir, that we thought on each other just at the same moment; but, as usual, you was thinking of obliging me, and I of giving you trouble. You have fully satisfied me of the connection between the Lancastrian princes and St. Edmundsbury. Edmondson, I conclude, will be able to find out the proprietor of the arms impaling Walrond.

I am well acquainted with Sir A. Weldon[1] and the *Aulicus Coquinariae*, and will return them with Mr. Ives's tracts, which I intend to buy at the sale of his books. Tell me how I may convey them to you most safely. You say, 'Till I show an inclination to borrow more of your MSS.' I hope you do not think my appetite for that loan is in the least diminished. I should at all minutes, and ever, be glad to peruse them all—but I was not sure you wished to lend them to me, though you deny me nothing—and my own fear of their coming to any mischance made me very modest about asking for them—but now, whenever you can send me any of them with perfect security, I eagerly and impudently ask to see them: you cannot oblige me more, I assure you.

I am sorry Dr. E.[2] is got into such a dirty scrape.

Letter 1752.—[1] Sir Antony Weldon, Knight, Clerk of the Green Cloth to Elizabeth and to James I, and Clerk of the Kitchen to the latter. Weldon wrote the secret history of the courts of James I and Charles I, and was answered by William Sanderson in *Aulicus Coquinariae*.

[2] Dr. William Ewin, of Cam-

There is scarce any decent medium observed at present between wasting fortunes and fabricating them; and both by any disreputable manner: for as to saving money by prudent economy, the method is too slow in proportion to consumption: even forgery[3], alas! seems to be the counterpart or restorative of the ruin by gaming. I hope at least that robbery on the highway will go out of fashion as too piddling a profession for gentlemen.

I enclose a card for your friends, but must advertise them that March is in every respect a wrong month for seeing Strawberry. It not only wants its leaves and beauty then, but most of the small pictures and curiosities, which are taken down and packed up in winter, are not restored to their places till the weather is fine and I am more there. Unless they are confined in time, your friends had much better wait till May—but, however, they will be very welcome to go when they please. I am more personally interested in hoping to see you there this summer. You must visit my new tower, diminutive as it is. It adds much to the antique air of the whole in both fronts. You know I shall sympathize with your gout, and you are always master of your own hours.

Yours most sincerely,
H. W.

1753. To the Rev. William Mason.

Feb. 27, 1777.

I was very wise in never advertising retirement. I knew well how difficult it is to quit the world, and yet have done with it. The love of fame has its colt's-tooth as well as old

bridge, who had been detected in lending money at enormous interest to an undergraduate.

[3] Probably an allusion to Dr. Dodd, who was tried and convicted of forgery on Feb. 22, 1777.

ladies. Alas! my good friend, heroes, philosophers, statesmen, have their itchings left, though their all[1] needs have been fully satisfied. Poor Mr. Garrick labours under this infirmity of age; he has complained of Mons. Le Texier for thinking of bringing over Caillaud, the French actor in the Opéra Comique, as a mortal prejudice to his reputation; and, no doubt, would be glad of an Act of Parliament that should prohibit there ever being a good actor again in any country or century. But this is not all; he has solicited King George to solicit him to read a play. The piece was quite new, *Lethe*, which their Majesties have not seen above ten times every year for the last ten years. He added three new characters equally novel, as a Lady Featherby, because the Queen dislikes feathers. The piece was introduced by a prologue *en fable*; a blackbird grown grey-haired, as blackbirds are wont to do, had retired from the world, but was called out again by the eagle. Mr. Hare[2] asked Garrick if his Majesty looked very like an eagle? The audience was composed of King, Queen, Princess Royal, Duchess of Argyll, Lady Egremont, Lady Charlotte Finch; the Prince of Wales was not present; and all went off perfectly ill, with no exclamations of applause and two or three formal compliments at the end. Bayes is dying of chagrin, and swears he will read no more.

My second moral example is in higher life. That old ruinous fragment of faction, Lord Temple, has had an aching gum too. Become by his separation from Lord Chatham, and by the death of his brother George, too insignificant and too impotent to overturn, awe, or even alarm the administration, he has been attempting to wriggle into a little favour by a mongrel mixture of treachery, spying,

LETTER 1753.—[1] So in *Correspondence of Walpole and Mason*; read 'all their needs.'

[2] James Hare (1749–1804), the wit and friend of Fox.

and *informing*, below a gentleman, and even below any Lord, but one. Affecting to be shocked at the attempt on Bristol, he employed one of his own incendiaries[3] to resort to the prison where John the Painter lies, and his worthy agent, by worming himself into that man's confidence, pretends to have learnt from him that the said John had received 300*l.* from Silas Deane, for the purpose of burning, not only Bristol, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, but the Bank of England, for stone and gold are wonderfully combustible. The natural philosophers in power believe that Dr. Franklin has invented a machine of the size of a toothpick case, and materials that would reduce St. Paul's to a handful of ashes. I know a very pious seigneur that firmly believes in this revival of the nostrum of the Old Man of the Mountain —though I do not think he would like this destructibility of gold, if he did believe in it.

The capture of the Hessians is confirmed with circumstances somewhat untoward, for they were not surprised, and yet all laid down their arms as if they liked lands in America better than the wretched pittance they are to receive out of the Landgrave's dole.

It is now the fashion to cry up the manœuvre of General Washington in this action, who has beaten two English regiments, too, and obliged General Howe to contract his quarters—in short, the campaign has by no means been wound up to content.

There is a great breach in the house of Holdernesse. Dayrolle's daughter[4] has eloped to *Leonidas* Glover's youngest son, who is a friend of Lord Carmarthen: Lady Carmarthen has harboured, and the Countess, her mother, has forbidden the daughter her court. This is my second letter. Mem. I have not had a line from you.

[3] A painter named Baldwin.

[4] Dayrolles had three daughters, but it is impossible to say which one is here referred to.

1754. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, March 5, 1777.

My last has already told you, I hope, that I am entirely recovered. You shall believe, if you please, that a moment of bootikins weakened *you*; but allow *me* to be certain that above three years of experience has demonstrated that they do not weaken *me*; and as to all reasonings of the Italian physicians, why, they are still more ignorant than ours. I shall not argue with them or you, for I have no convert-making zeal. I content myself with my own judgement and experience for my own use, and it is not reasonable to expect that others should see truth with my eyes. It has rarely happened to me to think with the majority, and I have so much respect for the plural number as not to dispute with them. There never were more against me than in our present politics. I have kept my sentiments pretty much to myself, but nothing has made me change my opinion. At present, the aspect is not as if I had been totally in the wrong. The campaign in America has lost a great deal of its florid complexion, and General Washington is allowed by both sides not to be the worst general in the field. The stocks are grown positive that we shall have a French war. *That* was so self-evident, that I should be ashamed of bragging I had always foreseen it. A child might foretell many of the consequences. I leave it to those who *would not* foresee to excuse themselves as they can.

The *Gazettes* will tell you as much as you are allowed to know or believe. If you do not understand them, you will not be singular. The time is coming, I doubt, when truth will write a more legible hand. In one word, the retreat of the Americans seems to have been wise; you will find

they will fight and have fought, and that, when we believed Philadelphia was gone, General Howe has been obliged to contract his quarters. I should think less than *unlimited submission*[1] would content us at present; and I leave you to judge whether France will be omitted in the negotiation, and whether she will enjoin the Congress to be very tractable. I hope there will be a little more wisdom in making the peace than there was in making the war; *but they who make the one, do not always consider that they may not be equally masters to make the other.*

I rejoice that there is a prospect of Lady Lucy's recovery. I admire your nephew's conduct both to her and his constituents.

There is scarcely anything of private news. Two old persons that you remember are dead, Sir Thomas Robinson[2] and Lady Shadwell[3]; she lived to ninety-six. The Duke of Norfolk, but two years younger, is recovered from a dangerous illness. Lady Chesterfield[4] has had a stroke of palsy, but may linger some time longer. In short, my dear Sir, you and I can only talk in common of a few Methusalems, cock and hen; for, as to the travelling boys that you get acquainted with *en passant*, I do not. I have done with the world, except parting with it in form; and chiefly pass my time with a few acquaintance or alone at Strawberry Hill, where I never want amusement. My old age is as agreeable as I desire it: oppressed with no misfortunes, disappointments, or infirmities,—for I am determined to consider the gout as a remedy that only makes

LETTER 1754.—[1] Lord George Germain declared in the House of Commons, when Secretary of State, that he would be content with nothing under the unlimited submission of America. *Walpole.*

[2] Sir Thomas Robinson, of Rokeby, commonly known as 'Long Sir Thomas.'

[3] Widow of Sir John Shadwell, physician to Queen Anne.

[4] Melusina Schulembourg, Countess of Walsingham, niece of the Duchess of Kendal, and widow of the celebrated Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield. She died in September 1778. *Walpole.*

my liberty more welcome; with a fortune as ample as I wish either for pleasing myself or for doing some kindnesses; indifferent to pleasures that would be ridiculous, and encumbered with no glory or vanity that would impose restraint or reserve on me. I enjoy the remnant with cheerfulness, and think I shall lay it down with no more regret than what must attend parting with what is not disagreeable. I am exceedingly thankful for the happiness of my lot, and own it has been far greater than I should have dared to ask. Can I, then, but be content when it shall terminate? This is the thirty-seventh year of our correspondence: we are the Orestes and Pylades of letter-writers, yet I wish our meeting had left us less to boast! Adieu!

P.S. I must add a curious story, which I believe will surprise your Italian surgeons, as much as it has amazed the faculty here. A sailor, who has broken his leg, was advised to communicate his case to the Royal Society. The account he gave was, that, having fallen from the top of the mast and fractured his leg, he had dressed it with nothing but tar and oakum, and yet in three days was able to walk as well as before the accident. The story at first appeared quite incredible, as no such efficacious qualities were known in tar, and still less in oakum; nor was a poor sailor to be credited on his own bare assertion of so wonderful a cure. The Society very reasonably demanded a fuller relation, and, I suppose, the corroboration of evidence. Many doubted whether the leg had been really broken. That part of the story had been amply verified. Still it was difficult to believe that the man had made use of no other applications than tar and oakum; and how *they* should cure a broken leg in three days, even if they could cure it at all, was a matter of the utmost wonder. Several letters

passed between the Society and the patient, who persevered in the most solemn asseverations of having used no other remedies, and it does appear beyond a doubt that the man speaks truth. It is a little uncharitable, but I fear there are surgeons who might not like this abbreviation of attendance and expense. But, on the other hand, you will be charmed with the plain honest simplicity of the sailor: in a postscript to his last letter he added these words: 'I forgot to tell your honours that the leg was a wooden one.' Was there ever more humour? What would one have given to have been present, and seen the foolish faces of the wise assembly? I am an unworthy member of that learned body, and never attend their meetings, which I now regret; I should have been paid for many dull hours: but I never had patience for such solemn assemblies, and have neglected that of the Arts and Sciences, as well as the Royal. I shut myself entirely out of the Antiquarian Society and Parliament, the archiepiscopal seats of folly and knavery.

1755. To the Rev. William Mason.

March 13, 1777.

So you think I have always something to say because I live in London? If I have, I am sure novelty does not constitute my cargo. The present world seems composed of forgery and informers, and the peers dignify the latter list, and may perhaps the former: I am not ambitious of being their historian. One Dignam[1], a candidate for the borough of Hindon, and Parliament, had given information of a plot against the King's life, which he had invented,

Letter 1755. — [1] David Brown Dignam, tried on April 2 on a charge of defrauding Mr. Clarke of upwards of £700 under pretence of procuring him the appointment of Clerk of the Minutes in the Dublin Custom House. He was found guilty, and sentenced 'to work five years upon the river Thames.'

and it neither producing a place for him nor Lord Temple, he took to selling places to others, which all his merit could not obtain for himself—and so he is only in Newgate. This is a specimen of town news. It is better to be at York, than write memoirs of Mrs. Grieve, Mrs. Rudd, Dr. Dodd, Mr. Dignam, and Lord Temple.

Hume's *Life*, written by himself, is just published. It is a nothing, a brief account of his disappointments on his irreligious works making no noise at first, and his historic making some. He boasts that in the latter he dared to revive the cause of despotism—a great honour truly to a philosopher; and he speaks of your friend, Bishop Hurd, with a freedom, that I dare to say the whole court will profess to his Lordship they think monstrous rudeness. My Lord H.[2], whose piety could swallow Hume's infidelity, will be shocked now that he should have employed such a brute.

The *Memoirs and Miscellaneous Works of Lord Chesterfield* are come out too. They are in two huge quartos, drawn up by Dr. Maty[3] and his son, and compiled chiefly from pamphlets. I am got but a little way into them with small edification, yet I have found a new anecdote or two, that are curious, and there are some of his *bons mots* that will be new to others. In the second volume are several of his French letters to a Madame de Monconseil, whom I know. She was married to a French officer, and when I was first recommended to her above thirty years ago, her mother kept a gaming-house, and the daughter has ever since dealt in intrigues of all sorts, which latterly, you may be sure, have been chiefly political; and of both sorts I believe interest was generally the motive. Towards the end of the

[2] The Earl of Hertford, who employed Hume as secretary when Ambassador at Paris.

[3] Matthew Maty (1718–1776), Principal Librarian of the British Museum. According to *D. N. B.*, Chesterfield's *Memoirs* were completed by his son-in-law, who was named Justamond.

Duke of Choiseul's power, her house was the rendezvous of all his enemies. I have seen Madame de Mirepoix there with Marshal Richelieu, whom, till faction reunited them, she would never be in a room with (but at court), as he killed her first husband[4]. She married her nephew to Madame de Monconseil's daughter, and that made a quarrel between Madame de Mirepoix and the Prime Minister[5], and was the true cause of his fall; for the Princess de Beauvau, her sister-in-law and enemy, to hurt Madame de Mirepoix, drove the Duchess de Grammont[6] into all the violence against Madame du Barri, and the Duke was so weak as to let those two women embroil him with the mistress. I was an eye-witness of those scenes, and at the Duke's three or four nights in a week, and heard all their indiscretions.

There are I see besides, a letter or two to Madame de Tencin, a most horrid woman, sister of the Cardinal. She had great parts and so little principle, that she was supposed to have murdered and robbed one of her lovers, a scrape out of which Lord Harrington, another of them, saved her. She had levees from eight in the morning till night, from the lowest tools to the highest. Dalembert was her natural son, Madame Geoffrin her pupil, and Pontdevesle her nephew, who was supposed to have only adopted her novels, the *Comte de Cominges*, and the *Mémoires de Philippe Auguste*. This acquaintance with the personages, English and French, makes me eager about these memoirs, and as I love nothing so much now as writing notes[7] in my books, this will furnish me with employment.

I am extremely of your opinion about the new old poems. Indeed you talk *en connoissance de cause*: who can dispute with the author of the *Monody*? As I already have your

[4] The Prince de Lixin.
[5] The Duc de Choiseul.
[6] Sister of the Duc de Choiseul.
[7] Horace Walpole's own copy of Chesterfield's *Memoirs*, with numerous notes in his handwriting, is in the British Museum.

Garden, I am less interested about its publication. I almost grudge the swine your pearls; yet write the third and the fourth, and sometimes to me, for I must be encouraged, or I cannot write even newspapers. There is nothing pleases me so much as humbling myself to the level of my talents. Writing notes in my books (as it requires only truth and memory, and no parts) suits me exactly; and had I always known myself as well as I do now, I should never have soared out of my sphere, and my works would have been highly valued, as I should have never had above one reader to each, the person who buys my books at my auction. Don't tell me you have nothing to say: you see how easy it is to make a long letter; one might have written this in the Isle of Sky, but you are a poet and a tragic author, and will not condescend to write anything lest your letters should rise in judgement against you. It is a mercy to have no character to maintain. Your predecessor, Mr. Pope, laboured his letters as much as the *Essay on Man*, and as they were written to everybody, they do not look as if they had been written to anybody. However, as I expect to be indemnified for your silence, I will consent to send you three letters for one, provided you give me a satisfactory account hereafter of your having been better employed than in answering mine. I certainly shall do nothing better than writing to you, and therefore whenever I have anything worth telling you, you shall hear it; and I shall not consider whether it is worth posterity's knowing or not. Posterity must deserve my favour a little better than their ancestors now living, or I shall not care a straw for their suffrage.

1756. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, March 28, 1777.

I have been here these six days alone, enjoying the bounty of March, which has laid aside its old dry winds and behaved

with a warmth, a heat that June seldom condescends to bestow. I have had every door and window all day open for these three days, and in the garden the sun was even too hot. I wonder that in this pious age there is no fear of an earthquake, and that my Lord of London[1] has not threatened us with one in his pastoral letter on Good Friday!

I left the town in a buzz about Lord Pigot's arrest[2], in which the Scots are said to have acted an ungentle part; nay, one of guile, if they could be suspected of any unfair dealings. We have fancied that this little isle could hold both the East and the West *in commendam*, and supply the places of Montezuma and Aurengzebe. I doubt France will soon present to both those cures of souls. Caius Manlius Washingtonius Americanus, the dictator, has got together a large army, larger than that our ally the Duke of Wirtemburg was to have sold us, and General Howe, who has nothing but salt provisions in our metropolis, New York, has not twenty thousand pounds' worth of pickles as he had at Boston; but I do not understand military matters, and therefore will say no more of them. Have you read Hume's *Life*, and did you observe that he thought of retiring to France and changing his name, because his works had not got him a name? Lord Bute called himself Sir John Stuart in Italy to shroud the beams of a title too gorgeous; but it is new to conceal a name that nobody had heard of. Have you got Lord Chesterfield? I have read his letters and like them, but Dr. Maty is no *Mason* at biography. You will be charmed with his *Common Senses* and *Fogs*, if you never read them, and with his *Worlds*, which you have read. They are the best of his works. Mr. Jephson has sent me his *Vitellia*, which Garrick rejected last year, with as much judgement

Letter 1756.—[1] Richard Terrick, Bishop of London; d. March 29, 1777.

[2] Lord Pigot, Governor of Madras, arrested by some of the members of his Council, in consequence of a quarrel, and thrown into prison, where he died on May 11, 1777.

as he acted all the wretched pieces that appeared at Drury Lane for so many years. It has beautiful poetry as *Braganza* had, and more action and more opportunities for good actors, if there were any.

This is my second since my promise of three, of which I repent already, as I have no satisfaction in writing but to hear from you; but I can make all three as short as I please, for the spirit and the letter of a promise are two very different things, vide Sanchez, Escobar[3], Mansfield, and other casuists on coronation oaths.

There has been a young gentlewoman overturned and terribly bruised by her *Vulcanian stays*. They now wear a steel busk down their middle, and a rail of the same metal across their breasts. If a hero attempts to storm such strong lines, and comes to a close engagement, he must lie as ill at his ease as St. Lawrence on his gridiron.

1757. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, April 3, 1777.

I THANK you most gratefully, my dear Sir, for your kind letter of the eleventh of last month; but I do assure you that I never had the most distant thought of endeavouring to recover what your late brother so indiscreetly appropriated to himself; nor would I for fifty times the sum attack his children, who were ignorant of the transaction. I have not only friendship but obligations enough to your family, to bear some hard things from any one of it; and though your late brother had often unkind thoughts of me, and treated me very often very harshly, yet I have too warm a temper myself not to pardon it in others—and besides, it is just to your brother to allow, that though he directed his

[3] Thomas Sanchez (d. 1610) and Antonio Escobar (d. 1669), members of the order of Jesuits.

anger to me, who was not only innocent, but a joint sufferer with him, the losses he felt from the derangement of my father's and brother's affairs were sufficient to raise his bile—but let us say no more of all this: I am, as to my own particular, glad of having had an opportunity of showing my affection for your family—yet I shall give a farther proof of it and of my justice, which your late brother called in question, though, as he did it out of ill-temper, I was too proud to satisfy *him*.

I have nothing very new to tell you on public affairs, especially as I can know nothing more than you see in the papers. It is my opinion that the King's affairs are in a very bad position in America. I do not say that his armies may not gain advantages again; though I believe there has been as much design as cowardice in the behaviour of the provincials, who seem to have been apprised that protraction of the war would be more certainly advantageous to them than heroism. Washington, the dictator, has shown himself both a Fabius and a Camillus. His march through our lines is allowed a prodigy of generalship. In one word, I look upon a great part of America as lost to this country! It is not less deplorable, that, between art and contention, such an inveteracy has been sown between the two countries as will probably outlast even the war! Supposing this unnatural enmity should not soon involve us in other wars, which would be extraordinary indeed, what a difference, in a future war with France and Spain, to have the colonies in the opposite scale, instead of being in ours! What politicians are those who have preferred the empty name of *sovereignty* to that of *alliance*, and forced subsidies to the golden ocean of commerce!

Alas! the trade of America is not all we shall lose! The ocean of commerce wafted us wealth at the return of regular tides: but we had acquired an empire too, in whose plains

the beggars we sent out as labourers could reap sacks of gold in three or four harvests; and who with their sickles and reaping-hooks have robbed and cut the throats of those who sowed the grain. These rapacious foragers have fallen together by the ears; and our Indian affairs, I suppose, will soon be in as desperate a state as our American. Lord Pigot has been treacherously and violently imprisoned, and the Company here has voted his restoration. I know nothing of the merits of the cause on either side: I dare to say both are very blamable. I look only to the consequences, which I do not doubt will precipitate the loss of our acquisitions there; the title to which I never admired, and the possession of which I always regarded as a transitory vision. If we could keep it, we should certainly plunder it, till the expense of maintaining would overbalance the returns; and, though it has rendered a little more than the holy city of Jerusalem, I look on such distant conquests as more destructive than beneficial; and, whether we are martyrs or banditti, whether we fight for the Holy Sepulchre or for lacks of rupees, I detest invasions of quiet kingdoms, both for their sakes and for our own; and it is happy for the former, that the latter are never permanently benefited.

Though I have been drawn away from your letter by the subject of it and by political reflections, I must not forget to thank you for your solicitude and advice about my health: but pray be assured that I am sufficiently attentive to it, and never stay long here in wet weather, which experience has told me is prejudicial. I am sorry for it, but I know London agrees with me better than the country. The latter suits my age and inclination; but my health is a more cogent reason, and governs me. I know my own constitution exactly, and have formed my way of life accordingly. No weather, nothing gives me cold; because, for these nine and thirty years, I have hardened myself so, by braving all

weathers and taking no precautions against cold, that the extremest and most sudden changes do not affect me in that respect. Yet damp, without giving me cold, affects my nerves; and, the moment I feel it, I go to town. I am certainly better since my last fit of gout than ever I was after one: in short, perfectly well; that is, well enough for my age. In one word, I am very weak, but have no complaint; and as my constitution, frame, and health require no exercise, nothing but fatigue affects me: and therefore you, and all who are so good as to interest themselves about me and give advice, must excuse me if I take none. I am preached to about taking no care against catching cold, and am told I shall one day or other be caught—possibly: but I must die of something; and why should not what has done to sixty be right? My regimen and practice have been formed on experience and success. Perhaps a practice that has suited the weakest of frames would kill a Hercules. God forbid I should recommend it; for I never saw another human being that would not have died of my darings, especially in the gout. Yet I have always found benefit; because my nature is so feverish, that everything cold, inwardly or outwardly, suits me. Cold air and water are my specifics, and I shall die when I am not master enough of myself to employ them; or rather, as I said this winter, on comparing the iron texture of my inside with the debility of my outside, 'I believe I shall have nothing but my inside left!' *Therefore*, my dear Sir, my regard for you will last as long as there is an atom of me remaining.

1758. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, April 5, 1777.

Young folks may fancy what they will of such antiques as I am, having no original pleasures, or only scraps and

ends; Lord Holland was always whining on the miseries of old age; now I can tell both the one and the other, that there are very cordial enjoyments, which only the old can have. I have just tasted two great raptures of the sort I mean,—but indeed they do not happen very often. The transports I allude to are living to see the *private* works, sentiments, and anecdotes of one's own time come to light. The two last folios of Lord Chesterfield delighted me upon that score, but there is still a fresher work of the same kind, and by far one of the most curious and authentic that ever was published. It is a history of many interesting parts of the latter end of Louis Quatorze, of the Regent, and of the late King of France, taken from an immense collection of state papers amassed by the two last Maréchaux de Noailles[1], furnished by the family, and though of dates so recent, and though published at Paris, written with a freedom and impartiality that are stupendous. I will give you an instance that is striking: one of the Maréchals congratulates Louis on the taking of Namur, and says it is a conquest that he alone could achieve. King William, says the author, took it with much more deserved applause two years afterwards. There are six duodecimos, pretty thick; the first relates chiefly to the persecution of the Protestants on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; is severe on the King, but unsatisfactory, because the Marshal being recalled, the author follows him and not the war; and this is almost the only kind of fault I find in the work, which ought to have been called Memoirs of the two marshals, instead of Memoirs of two reigns. But the invaluable part, and that pretty perfect, is the genuine and secret history of Spain on the establishment of Philip V.

Letter 1758.—[1] Anne Jules (1650–1708), Duc de Noailles, and Adrien Maurice (1678–1766), Duc de Noailles, his son and successor. The *Mémoires* were edited by the Abbé Millot (1726–1785).

Nothing ever was more curious—you will even see the pains Louis XIV took to persuade his grandson to give up Spain and content himself with Sardinia, and you cannot doubt it. The two last volumes are not less interesting to me, who have the very minute of time before my eyes. I remember how I trembled, as Lord Chesterfield did (for these Memoirs are the counterpart of his) just before the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and yet you will see that the court of France was in as great a panic as we had reason to be. I remember saying often, that a little thing saved us as ruined us, and that if France had not as incapable ministers as we had, we must be undone. Perhaps, when more Memoirs of the family of Noailles appear, somebody or other will make this reflection again.

The second Marshal had (luckily for posterity, though probably a little wearisome at the time) a rage of drawing up memorials; but he was a good and a prudent man; and the latter quality made his courage a little doubted, as the author fairly owns. I remember a *bon mot* of his son, the present Marshal, on that topic. The old gentleman had like to have been drowned by going in a boat on the water; his son, the Duc d'Ayen, a great *bon mot*ist, scolded the servants for not hindering his father, and said, 'Ne scavez-vous pas que mon père craint l'eau comme le feu?'

You cannot conceive the avidity with which I devoured these volumes; one cannot be more vigorous at eighteen, but alas! one cannot go to Drury Lane and pick up two Noailles's every night! It is vexatious too, that as these papers will spread the taste of hoarding state papers (which the old Marshal had retained from the taste of memoir-writing that was rife in his youth), I shall not live to see those collections. We are indeed likely to have an immense collection ere long, but not quite so important. It seems by a note of Dr. Maty, that Lord Chesterfield—who I thought

had used him only as a butt to shoot wit at—had kept up a correspondence with *Long* Sir Thomas Robinson for fifty years. Well, Sir Thomas is dead too; and lest the public should sigh for his answers, as they did for Madame de Grignan's, he was so industrious as to keep copies of his; nay, he had preserved every letter he ever received; nay, and he had kept copies of all his answers to all them too; and he has left all (letters and answers) to the Roman people; that is, to an apothecary who married his natural daughter, with injunctions to publish all,—which will last me my life. Oh, but stay, the Primate of Ireland, Sir Thomas's brother, is not quite so indulgent as the house of Noailles, who have suffered a letter of a bishop, their uncle, who teases the Marshal for promotion, to be published. My Lord of Armagh is consulting lawyers whether he cannot stop the publication, and in truth it is an abominable thing that private letters of living persons should be printed.

I do not know a tittle of what has happened in Europe (or America) since Lord Chesterfield and Monsieur de Noailles died, but I shall go to town on Monday, recollect the living, and tell you what they have been doing; but then you must take care to answer this, which is *the third*, or if Lord Temple should find a plot in a meal-tub or a flower-pot, I shall not be able to tell you till I am empowered to write a first letter.

8th, Lond.

The Bishop of London is dead, and Mlle. Khrome. I thought your friend Dr. Hurd would have succeeded them both. The message[2] for the debts and civil list is to be delivered to-morrow. Somebody knocks, and I must finish.

[2] A message from the King, asking for the payment of his debts and an increase of his revenue.

1759. To the Rev. William Mason.

April 18, 1777.

I have *seen* but not read one syllable of Marmontel's *Yncas*, nor ever will. History is romance enough, without purposely perverting it. I could not wade through a quarter of his *Belisarius*. I hope the Peruvians will have better masters to teach them liberty than French *philosophes*, and not be obliged to go to Paris on their way to Thermopylæ. However, as you can strike fire from a flint, I am disposed to send you the book, and shall be delighted if you beget a Pandora on a cloud.

It is easy to me to believe your friend's discoveries in encaustic. Müntz went far enough to prove the facility, use, and durability, but not far enough to get the method adopted; not from any defect or difficulty in the practice, but from the stupidity and obstinacy and John-Trot-plodding-in-the-same-wayness of the professors. If you think, because it talks more of the arts, that the age is grown more sensible and docile, I shall not agree with you. In truth I have made up my mind in a superb contempt of everything present, not because I am old and prefer the days of my youth: I go much further back. Except yours, which can produce adamants that will resist time and live to be dug up in a brighter century, I am for totally discouraging genius. The soil in which it could shoot and flourish vigorously is worn out—at least in this island. It is a reprobated land in every sense, and if I were twenty years younger, I would seek a wiser country; for there is a joy in looking up to great men and admiring them; there is none to a generous mind in looking down on anybody, much less on all and without any of the pride of virtue. I trust one may, without vanity, despise a world that respects nothing but gold, whether to

hoard or squander. The contempt of money is no more a virtue than to wash one's hands is one; but one does not willingly shake hands with a man that never washes his.

Lord Chesterfield's *Characters* are published, and are not even prettily written, as might have been expected. They are not so much as terse and quaint, which would not indeed have made them better, but they are even vulgar and ill-expressed: one would think he did not know the personages well with whom he had been so conversant. This is not from prejudice that I speak, for my father's is tolerably impartial, and in some parts just, yet as it was preserved by his Lordship, so many years after the confutation was notorious, it shows old prejudice to tax him with having sacrificed everything to the purpose of making a great fortune. He was born to 2,500*l.* a year, left a nominal estate of 8,000*l.*, and died 50,000*l.* in debt. Tom Windham was more ingenuous, even though in opposition, and in the height of the clamour. Going to see Longleat, built by Sir John Thynne, steward to the Protector Somerset, and the man who showed the house (which by the way is a town in comparison) saying, 'It is a large house, but we don't pretend that it rivals Houghton,' Windham replied, 'No; yet I believe Mr. Jenkins (my father's steward) has not built such an one.' The character of the Queen[1] is equally unjust: avarice was by no means her failing. Lord Hardwicke is as ridiculously exalted. More, Bacon, Clarendon, were nothing to that mirror of magistrates; you would think that Lord Chatham could have out-reasoned Lord Mansfield, as easily as his thunder shook that aspen leaf. I do not recommend to your friend to copy these portraits in encaustic.

There is another scurrilous poem by the author of the

LETTER 1759.—[1] Queen Caroline, wife of George II. Lord Chesterfield wrote of her that she 'loved money, but could occasionally part with it.'

Diaboliad. It is particularly hurled at the heads of the Hertfords. The writer is supposed to be a Captain Coombes[2], whose title to the office of censor-general is having been guilty of forgery; and to be executioner, to having married a common woman, who was kept by Lord Beauchamp, . . .[3] Are not we an exemplary people?

The payment of the King's debts was gratefully accorded yesterday by those who had contributed to cause his necessities. Charles Fox made a great figure in behalf of Lord John's[4] motion for a committee. The latter apologized for the secession of his friends, on their finding they could do no good. Wilkes made a panegyric on the real King of France for his tenderness to his brothers, unlike the gloomy tyrant—and then he paused—Louis XI. In the Lords, Lord Rockingham and the Duke of Grafton differed on one motion, and agreed on another. I know nothing of the Budget, but I am charmed with a new mode of government, which everybody else laughs at; I mean the decision of the Directors of the East India Company, by tossing up heads and tails, whether Lord Pigot should be a prisoner or a nabob. If every nation was to be ruled by this compendious and impartial method, the people would on every occasion have an equal chance for happiness from every measure; and I beg to know where it is not three to one against them by every other mode. I would be content to live under the most despotic monarchy that could be devised, provided King Heads-and-Tails were the sovereign.

You wonder I say nothing on your second *Garden.* No, you don't. It is not upon any of the topics of the week, and the silent few that read from taste come seldom in my way, who live half the week stark alone at Strawberry, and

[2] William Combe (1741–1823), who afterwards wrote *Dr. Syntax's Tours.* A different story of his marriage is related in *D.N.B.*

[3] Passage omitted.

[4] Lord John Cavendish

the rest of it with folks whose reading is the last thing I desire to hear them talk of; yet they do talk of it, for it is the *Morning Post*. Lord Nuneham indeed told me to-night that a Lord of his acquaintance had taken your *Garden* for Gray's and did not like it. We were both very glad of both, and I am sure you agree with us. Adieu!

1760. To Sir Horace Mann.

Barton Mills, April 28, 1777.

I do not know whether Mr. Sharpe has yet complied with my request, and acquainted Lady Orford with the return of her son's insanity. I chose that method of informing her Ladyship not to oblige her to renew a correspondence with me, which she dropped the moment I sent her a letter in which I asked no favour for myself, but gave her an opportunity of obliging the single friend[1] of her son that had shown gratitude to him, when he was deemed no longer capable of serving anybody. I should have desired you, my dear Sir, rather than Mr. Sharpe to make this melancholy notification, if experience had not taught me that Lady O. has Spartan fortitude enough to support her son's calamity with unshaken nerves.

Yes, after an interval of three years, in which my nephew remained as much in his senses as he was *supposed* to be before his declared frenzy, he was seized a fortnight ago with a fever which soon brought out the colour of his blood. In two days he was furious. The low wretches by whom in his *sensible* hours he has always been surrounded, concealed the symptoms till they were terrifying. I received no notice till the sixth day, and then—by the stage-coach! I set out directly for the hovel where he is—a *pasnidge-*

Letter 1760.—[1] Charles Boone, Esq. *Walpole.*

house, as the reverend proprietor[2] called it to me, on the edge of the fens, which my Lord hires, and is his usual residence. The single chamber without a bed is a parlour seven feet high, directly under my Lord's bedchamber, without shutters, and so smoky that there is no sitting in it unless the door is open. I am forced to lie here, five miles off, in an inn—a palace to *his* dwelling. The morning after my arrival, a physician I had sent for from Norwich, forty miles from hence, coming down to tell me how he had found my Lord, we were alarmed with a scream and a bustle. The doctor had ordered the window to be opened to let out the smoke, and, the moment he had quitted his patient, my Lord attempted to fling himself out of the window, but was prevented by his keeper and servants, who flung him on the bed. You will scarcely believe that, on my arrival, his mistress, his steward, and a neighbouring parson of the confederacy, on my declaring I should remove him directly to London for proper assistance, cried out, that I should kill him if I conveyed him from that Paradise in which was all his delight, and where he has so long swallowed every apple that every serpent has offered to him. The very day before he had asked where he was.

At the desire of the Norwich physician, I sent for Dr. Jebb from London. Before he came, the fever was gone, and an interval of sense was returned. Yet, as before, he would only speak in a whisper, and could not be persuaded to show his tongue to Dr. Jebb, though he made rational answers. Dr. Jebb pronounced that he had neither fever nor understanding. He has had a slight return of

[2] One Ball, minister of Eriswell, a jockey-parson. He having taken his doctor's degree in an interval of his correspondence with Mr. Walpole on Lord Orford's transactions about the parsonage-house, and Mr. Walpole directing his letter to him, ignorant of his titular advancement, 'To Mr. Ball,' the man in his answer was so absurd as to add a postscript in these words, 'Dr. Ball, if you please, the next time you favour me.' *Walpole.*

the former, and no delirium. Yet both his physicians, the apothecary, and even his mistress, think his disorder will still last some weeks. Perhaps it may not; nor is it the worst consideration that he will have these relapses: as this arrived in very cold weather, and from no apparent cause, the madness is evidently constitutional, and leaves both himself and his family with all their apprehensions. Mine are, that as both now and formerly he has betrayed mischievous designs, he will after some lucid interval destroy himself; and I have seen that the crew about him will not call in help till perhaps too late. They had not even sent for a physician; because, as they told me, my Lord (a lunatic) has no opinion of physicians. Judge of my distress! My brother[3] and I have too much tenderness and delicacy to take out the statute of lunacy. All my care and attention to him, his mistress, and fortune, in his former illness, have not made the smallest impression. I have not even seen him these three years, though he declared on his recovery that he approved all I had done; and I must say that I meant to set an example of tenderness which, I believe, was never seen before in a parallel case. I cannot resent it from him; for his misfortune acquits him of everything. I had greatly improved his fortune, and should have effected much more, had he not instantly taken everything out of my hands.

This treatment, and many such reasons, had determined me never more to meddle with his affairs: indeed, the fatigue, joined to my apprehension, had half killed me. I had done everything at my own risk, and some things at my own cost. Thus, without the sanction of law, which I will not claim for my Lord's sake, I could not undertake his affairs again. I now declared I would take on me the care of his person and health, but never of his fortune—

[3] Sir Edward Walpole.

what will become of that, I know not! My own peace, at the end of my life, and broken as I am, must weigh something. I have, from the instant my Lord came of age, laboured to serve him—in vain. I have struggled hard to rescue and restore my family; a proud view, perhaps, yet as reasonable as most we have! Vision for vision, that insubstantial and transitory one, called philosophy, that is, indifference, is, I suppose, the best. What are distant views in this world? To be realized when we are past knowing it. How idle are hopes about futurity, whether about our family or our country; and how little different in duration and extent, when compared with the succession of ages! If we hope our name and race, or if, on a grander scale, we wish the constitution of our country may last, are not those lofty views confined to two or three hundred years, which are but a moment in the revolution of endless centuries? The moment we step beyond the diminutive sphere of our familiar ideas, all is boundless and lost in immensity!—I descend to earth, to me and my little concerns.

I shall stay here to see the physician from Norwich to-morrow. If he pronounces, as I expect, that my Lord is recovered, I shall take my leave, and resign him to the rudder of his own poor brain. I pity him, but it must be so. My character and Sir Edward's are at stake, and to preserve them we must obey the law literally. The last time, the moment the physicians pronounced him sane, we submitted and threw open his doors; though neither of us were of that opinion. I attended him to Houghton, and saw nothing but evidence of distraction. The gentlemen of the country came to congratulate his recovery; yet, for more than six weeks, he would do nothing but speak in the lowest voice, and would whisper to them at the length of the table, when the person next to him could not distinguish what he said. Every evening, precisely at the

same hour, sitting round a table, he would join his forehead to his mistress's (who is forty, red-faced, and with black teeth, and with whom he has slept every night these twenty years), and there they would sit for a quarter of an hour, like two paroquets, without speaking. Every night, from seven to nine, he regularly, for the whole fortnight, made his secretary of militia, an old drunken, broken tradesman, read Statius to the whole company, though the man could not hiccup the right quantity of the syllables. Imagine what I suffered! One morning I asked the company, before my Lord was up, how they found him? They answered, just as he had always been. Then, thought I, he has always been distracted.

Forgive my tiring you with these details! They have rushed into my memory again, and I cannot help venting them. I must expel them once more; though every sudden knock at my door at an unusual hour will terrify me, as it did for thirteen months three years ago. I have gone the round of all my thoughts, and can rest on no plan. Were families to have more power, it would be abused; and, as the law has fixed the criterions of sense, no private man for the best purposes must, can, control it. I have done all I can; which is, to warn my Lord's dependants of the danger of concealing the first symptoms of his infirmity; and have endeavoured to alarm them, for their own sakes, with the risk of his not observing rigid temperance. Their interest in his health must combat their interest in flattering him. Adieu!

Arlington Street, May 2.

The Norwich physician said he found my Lord so much better, that I left him two days ago; though his mistress desired I would leave the keeper, at least for a month. Thus his life will be safe. On cool reflection my plan is settled. On the first notice of any relapse, I shall refuse to

go to him; declaring that if his people will bring him to town, I will be answerable for his safety; but that I will not, if they keep him in the country far from all help and proper attendance. In that case, they that detain him shall be responsible. This, I trust, will alarm them, and preserve him; I can conceive nothing better.

1761. To the Rev. William Mason.

Arlington Street, May 2, 1777.

I ask Mr. Fraser to send you the *Incas*; I wish they may produce a thousandfold.

You must not expect news nor anything from me. I have been again involved in a sea of troubles: my nephew Lord Orford is relapsed, and I have passed the last ten days between the inn at Barton Mills[1], and the hovel where he is five miles thence. He is so far come to himself, that when he will speak, which is only in a whisper, his answers are rational. I will not tire you with the variety of my distresses, which are manifold; doctors, lawyers, stewards, rogues and relations, take up my whole time. I stole one day to walk through[2] [Cambridge] and dine with old Cole; I sighed to take the vows at the former. I think I could pass my last days there with great comfort. King's Chapel is more beautiful than Strawberry Hill. A bookish monk is a happy being; he is neither disposed to laugh, nor to feel, and scarce knows that the other two divisions are fools and villains. Adieu!

Letter 1761.—[1] Near Mildenhall, in Suffolk.

[2] The word 'Cambridge' was evidently omitted here.

1762. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, May 14, 1777.

Your last has given me both pain and pleasure. I know the gout too well not to suffer for you; though when it begins but late in life it is never very violent, and certainly is very wholesome discipline. It is ten times worse to have ceremony and princes to struggle with at such a moment; and I tremble lest your efforts against an enemy that will not bear an instant of contradiction, should have redoubled your torment. Oh, death itself does not regard princes less than the gout does. Then, on the other hand, I am charmed with the Duke's[1] condescension; and the more, as he will have witnessed your disability. I am sure, in some ministers, he might with reason have suspected your confinement was political.

You do not owe to me, I assure you, the Duchess's graciousness. I did not even imagine they would pass through Florence. She has not at all forgotten that she was not royally born, and her good nature and familiarity are not expelled by dignity. I am sure you found her as easy and natural as if she had not married even Lord Waldegrave. When she left England, her beauty had lost no more than her good qualities. I am glad your court has behaved as they ought. I am glad the English see there is no nation so contemptibly servile as our own. Europe, that has hated our *fierté*, is reaping revenge fast. Our western sun is setting, and dark clouds hang over our east. France and Spain have spoken pretty intelligibly. The former offered us for themselves, and for the latter, a naval disarmament. We jumped at it; and France coldly answered, Spain would not come into it. So a war

Letter 1762. — [1] The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were then at Florence. *Walpole.*

is sure, whenever they think us enough undone to be totally ruined. I believe a younger minister than Monsieur de Maurepas would think so at present.

My own distress continues, and by fits I suppose will last for my life. My nephew seemed calmer, but is again unruly and sullen. I have got him within twelve miles of London, so that his person will be safe. As to his affairs, I have peremptorily refused to meddle with them. I will not see all my webs unravelled every six months. I check myself on this subject, because I am too full of it not to be apt to talk too much on it when once tapped.

I rejoice you have got your nephew again, and Lady Lucy, and that she is so much better than you expected. I trust Lord Orford's agreement with his grandfather's creditors, which he had just signed, is good. The law will probably think so. In my private opinion, he has been mad these twenty years and more. On his coming of age, I obtained a fortune of one hundred and fifty-two thousand pounds for him: he would not look at her[2]. Had I remained charged with his affairs six months longer on his last illness, he would have been five thousand a year richer than the day he fell ill. My reward was, not to see him for three years. But I see I cannot help talking of this. I had twice expunged all thoughts of Houghton and my family from my memory. They are forced on me again when I can do no good. Well, it was not my plan of old age to pass my time with princes or madmen! Mine has been a chequered life of very various scenes! But it has taught me some temper, which I was not born with; and the best of all lessons, to do right, because others do wrong. It is not enough to be indignant, if one does not mend oneself. I had much to mend, and corrections made in age have very little grace. One seldom conquers one's passions till

[2] Miss Nicol, afterwards Marchioness of Carnarvon.

time has delivered them up bound hand and foot. Therefore I have very little esteem for my own philosophy. It is at most but solicitude to make a decent exit, and applying to one's character what Pope makes an expiring beauty say of her face—

One would not sure be frightful when one's dead!

Alas! we are ridiculous animals. Folly and gravity equally hunt shadows. The deepest politician toils but for a momentary rattle. There is nothing worth wishing for but the smile of conscious innocence; and that consciousness would make the smile of age more beautiful than even the lovely infant's simplicity. I possess no such jewel: but one may admire a diamond, though one cannot obtain it. You see how my nephew throws my mind into a moral train, which is naturally more gay; and my wisdom commonly prefers accepting the vision life as a something, to analysing it. But one is the creature of the hour, and this happens to be a serious one. Adieu!

May 15.

I have received your long letter, and thank you for it most particularly; especially for one part, which you may guess by my not mentioning. But you was so pleased with the Duchess's manner, that you forgot her beauty; which I thought would strike you. The little Princess[3] is a dear soul, and I do not intend to be inconstant and prefer her brother[4]; nor do I think the Duke will.

We have no news. France has imprisoned the crew of a privateer that took one of our packet-boats, and carried it into Dunkirk. She is determined to draw us on farther on the hook, and we dare not seem to suspect that hook. I believe America gone past hope, unless we can recover

[3] Princess Sophia Matilda of Gloucester.

[4] Prince William Frederick of Gloucester.

it with half the number that was not sufficient last year. Adieu! I shall be impatient to hear you are recovered. Your new Prince of Nassau[5] is perfectly ridiculous—a real peer of England to tumble down to a tinsel titularity! Indeed, an English coronet will not be quite so weighty as it was!

1763. To the Rev. William Mason.

May 16.

As a Goth, as a respecter of princes of the name of William, and as uncle of one of that name[1], I certainly shall not refuse my mite to the re-enshrinement of the bones of poor William of Hatfield. I will willingly be at the whole expense, if you will take care I shall have no honour from it, as I hate crowding one's name into Fame's account-book, by bringing her in a bill for stone and mortar. You shall have his Royal Highness's arms too, and anything but the epitaph. I have neither time nor understanding left for writing anything. My nephew's situation will employ and poison all my leisure; and were it not my way to occupy every minute, I could not go through half I have to do, and all I wish to do I leave undone. If I forget Prince William's arms, you must put me in mind.

In all my trouble I cannot be forgetful of you. Here is come out a paltry *Supplement* to Hume's *Life*, with his will, a supplement to his vanity. He modestly orders only his name to be mentioned on his tomb, but appoints posterity his executors, and requires them to write an epitaph setting forth his great abilities according to the high opinion they will have of them. *Voilà un philosophe.* The editor grossly

[5] Earl Cowper had obtained a titular principality from the Emperor, imagining that he should take place of English dukes; but finding his mistake, and that it would give him no precedence at all here, he dropped the title of Prince. *Walpole.*

Letter 1763. — Hitherto placed amongst letters of 1778. (See *Notes and Queries*, Dec. 31, 1898.)

[1] The Duke of Gloucester.

abuses you for what I hope you glory in, the publication of Gray's letters; in particular that which censures Hume, which the fool calls illiberal. By Hume's own account of himself he attacked all religion, in order to be talked of. It is *illiberal* in a very moral man to be shocked at atheism! This is Scotch morality! The condemnation of Gray's letters is Scotch taste! The whole nation hitherto has been void of wit and humour, and even incapable of relishing it. The dull editor says Gray never thought his letters would see the light. He does not perceive how much that circumstance enhances their merit: I do not wonder he is insensible of their charming beauties. Nobody yet ever wrote letters so well, and his earliest have more marks of genius than his latest. Your crime does not lie in what you have given of Gray, but of yourself. The Scots like to wound with another man's dagger: you will only smile at their impotence. I wish they could only stab with their pens,—

> The grey-goose quill that is thereon,
> In no man's blood will be wet.

I know no news. You have seen the Speaker's remonstrance[2], and how ably Charles Fox made the House adopt it, and consequently the condemnation of their own act.

I have seen Sheridan's new comedy[3], and liked it much better than any I have seen since *The Provoked Husband.* There is a great deal of wit and good situations, but it is too long, has two or three bad scenes that might easily be omitted, and seemed to me to want nature and truth of character; but I have not read it, and sat too high to hear it well. It is admirably acted. Burke has published

[2] Rigby commented on some remarks made by the Speaker in presenting the Civil List Bill to the King. The Speaker complained to the House of Rigby's attack. 'Charles Fox proposed words in justification of the Speaker which were agreed to without a division,' and Rigby apologized. (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. pp. 115, 116.)

[3] *The School for Scandal*, produced on May 8, 1777.

a pamphlet on the American War, and an apology for his own secession and that of his friends[4]. I have not had time to look at it, but I do not believe I shall agree with him on the latter part so much as on the first. Do not return me the *Incas*; I shall never read it. I hear your *Garden* was criticized in the *Morning Post*. Continue to plant

Flowers worthy of paradise,—

and do not mind their being trampled on in such a soil as this. Adieu! I wish I had leisure to chat with you longer.

1764. To the Rev. William Cole.

Arlington Street, May 22, 1777.

It is not owing to forgetfulness, negligence, or idleness, to none of which I am subject, that you have not heard from me since I saw you, dear Sir, but to my miserable occupation with my poor nephew, who engrosses my whole attention, and will, I doubt, destroy my health, if he does not recover his. I have got him within fourteen miles of town with difficulty. He is rather worse than better, may recover in an instant, as he did last time, or remain in his present sullenness. I am far from expecting he should ever be perfectly in his senses, which, in my opinion, he scarce ever was. His intervals expose him to the worst people, his relapses overwhelm me.

I have put together some trifles I promised you, and will beg Mr. Lort to be the bearer when he goes to Cambridge, if I know of it. At present I have time for nothing I like. My age and inclination call for retirement: I envied your happy hermitage, and leisure to follow your inclination. I have always *lived post*, and shall now die before I can bait—yet it is not my wish to be unemployed, could I but

[4] The *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol.*

choose my occupations. I wish I could think of the pictures you mention, or had had time to see Dr. Glynn and the Master of Emmanuel[1]. I doat on Cambridge, and could like to be often there—the beauty of King's College Chapel, now it is restored, penetrated me with a visionary longing to be a monk in it—though my life has been passed in turbulent scenes, in pleasures—or rather pastimes, and in much fashionable dissipation, still books, antiquity, and *virtù* kept hold of a corner of my heart, and since necessity has forced me of late years to be a man of business, my disposition tends to be a recluse for what remains—but it will not be my lot, and though there is some excuse for the young doing what they like, I doubt an old man should do nothing but what he ought; and I hope doing one's duty is the best preparation for death. Sitting with one's arms folded to think about it, is a very lazy way of preparing for it. If Charles V had resolved to make some amends for his abominable ambition by doing good, his duty as a King, there would have been infinitely more merit than going to doze in a convent. One may avoid active guilt in a sequestered life, but the virtue of it is merely negative, though innocence is beautiful.

I approve much of your corrections on Sir J. Hawkins, and send them to the magazine.

I want the exact blazon of William of Hatfield his arms, —I mean the Prince buried at York. Mr. Mason and I are going to restore his monument, and I have not time to look for them. I know you will be so good as to assist

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

Letter 1764.—[1] Richard Farmer, D.D. (d. 1797).

1765. To Sir William Hamilton.

Arlington Street, May 23, 1777.

Last Monday I found on my table a curious case of tortoise-shell studded with silver, with an anonymous note telling me it had belonged to Van Trump[1]. My stupid footboy could not recollect the name of the sender. I was going to advertise for my benefactor, and have made such a rout with my gratitude, that at last the housemaid recollected the footman had told her it was Sir William Hamilton: you know, dear Sir, how many reasons I have for believing her; Strawberry Hill is filled—with your presents, and if they could speak, would be with my gratitude. Your name is in every page of my catalogue, which is some proof of what I say—but as gratitude without shame is but an honest whore that vows she will take money, I beg that if you deserve to sit for Liberality, I may have some claim to be drawn for Modesty, and therefore I do beg you will never give me anything more, as I could not be more ashamed, nor more than I am

Your most obliged
Humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

1766. To the Rev. William Cole.

May 28, 1777.

I have but time for a word, Mr. Lort has just been here, and does not return to Cambridge this month, he has

Letter 1765.—Not in C.; now first printed from original in possession of Messrs. Ellis & Elvey, New Bond Street, W.

[1] In the *Description of Strawberry Hill* Horace Walpole states that the case was that in which Van Tromp used to take his pipe to sea.

Letter 1766.—Not in C.; printed in the 4to (1818) ed. of the letters to Cole; now printed from original in British Museum.

advised me to send the box by the waggon; and it goes to-morrow by Burley's from the Bull. It is a large box, and yet contains very little, and less worth sending you; but the glass required bran, which makes the bulk. I found most of the pieces I bought at Mr. Ives's had suffered so much, by being brought to London and carried to Twickenham, that they were too broken to offer you. You will find indeed but one good piece, that in this shape ⬭. The strange old ivory carving was given to me by the Dowager Duchess of Aiguillon. There are a few proofs of views of Strawberry; but some time or other you shall have a new and complete set. There is Strawberry's pedigree too; but I can find no print of Ganganelli[1]. I am ashamed so large a box should contain only such rubbish. Adieu.

1767. To John Robinson.

Sir,

My deputy, Mr. Bedford, has acquainted me that you are desirous of knowing the prices I pay for the several articles with which, as Usher of the Exchequer, I supply the Treasury; and he told me that you added that Lord North has a mind to make new regulations that may be economic for the public. I have accordingly, Sir, ordered Mr. Bedford to give you the most exact information on every particular. He told me too that Lord North would be so just as, I do not doubt, to make compensations to anybody that should suffer by such alterations. Give me leave, Sir, to say that it is not on that ground that I now trouble you. On the contrary it is to beg you will be so good as to acquaint Lord North, that he may not only command any information from me on that subject, as far as I myself am con-

1 Probably Pope Clement XIV, whose family name was Ganganelli.

Letter 1767.—Not in C.; reprinted from 4to ed. of Lord Orford's *Works* (1798), vol. ii. p. 386.

cerned, and which it is my duty to give, but that I shall cheerfully acquiesce in whatever new regulations he shall be pleased to make for the benefit of the public. No rights or interest of mine shall stand in the way of so good a purpose; and when I use the word *rights*, it is not to support but to waive them for any national benefit. I have received too great benefits and too long from the crown and the public, not to owe any facility in my power, as far as so inconsiderable a person can do it, to ease the burdens of both, and I shall with great willingness accept whatever shall be thought proper for me on any new plan of public economy. I should think myself of too little consequence to say this, were it not that the example of the most private man may be of use on such an occasion. I am, Sir, with great regard,

Your obedient humble servant,

Arlington Street, June 9, 1777. HORACE WALPOLE.

1768. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1777.

I DIRECT this to Ampthill, concluding from your unwillingness to leave it, Madam, that your stay at Warwick Castle will be short. You must be charmed with it; I think awed; at least, my Gothic superstition sees every tower haunted with Beauchamps, and I could not sleep there without dreaming of Queen Elizabeth in all her pomps and pageantries. Then the chapel in the church! I beg the possessor's pardon, but I set very little store by Sir Fulke Greville. Oh, but in the castle is a portrait of my hero, Lord Brook of the Civil War; and another of Lady Catherine Grey[1] and her son, and of Lady Sandwich[2], who

LETTER 1768.—[1] Daughter of the Duke of Suffolk, and sister of Lady Jane Grey; m. (1) Lord Herbert; (2) Earl of Hertford; d. 1568.

[2] Elizabeth Wilmot, Countess of Sandwich, daughter of the Earl of

was no great hero of mine, no more than Lord Rochester and his monkey. Did you go to Guy's Cliff, and see how Lady Mary Greathead[3] has painted it straw-colour, and stuck cockle-shells in its hair? There was a wise Mr. Wise too, who lived at the Priory, who was very angry with me for asking if he had *planted* much, not knowing that he was the son of London and Wise the gardeners. Does not Miss Vernon think it would have been more historic to have drawn her accompanying Earl Guy when he slew the dun cow, than St. George killing the dragon[4], which is not a quarter so true?

Your Ladyship's panegyric on the fine weather, if you will allow me to pun, came a day after the *fair*. June has relapsed into winter, if not to its usual rains. I found every soul in London sitting by the fire, and talking over fifteen matches, and as many promotions. Mrs. Howe was the only person that wanted no extraneous heat. Two nights ago, she said, if Lord North had *promised* the Treasury to Lord Westcote, he certainly would not have it. Entered Mr. Keene. She asked him if it was the way of the administration to affront those they employed! He was mute. 'You may think what you please, Sir,' continued she, 'but I tell you, this is irreconcilable.' Governor Tryon[5] has burnt a magazine, but had great difficulty to retreat without losing all his men. Washington, they say, has laid the whole country waste. I am an old piece of wisdom, and you must bear with me. I doubt your Ladyship's dislike of quitting Ampthill proceeds a little from your aversion to appearing in public; but do you know you must surmount this, nay entirely. Will you like, when your daughters are

Rochester, whose portrait at Warwick Castle represents him crowning his monkey with laurel.

[3] Lady Mary Bertie (d. 1774), eldest daughter of second Duke of Ancaster; m. (1748) Samuel Greathed, of Guy's Cliff.

[4] Referring to Sir Joshua Reynolds' picture.

[5] William Tryon (1725–1788), Governor of New York.

to go about, to trust them to chaperons? The longer you are a recluse, the more uneasy it will be to break through a habit. You feel Lady Georgiana's[6] want of you, and therefore must be educating yourself to produce Lady Anne. There is no pleasure in being anybody's friend, if one is not to tell them disagreeable truths; nor any comfort in growing old, if one may not be cross and preach. Our two resources, both charmingly ill-natured, are to foretell, and to blame. I make use of the first privilege, for fear of not living to enjoy the second. I have a little revenge in it too, for you *will* commend me, though I have no merit but having lived till I am fit for nothing but doing right.

The kingdom of France does not dine with me till *next* Saturday: it will ruin me, but I try to make friends amongst them, that they may not burn poor Strawberry when they invade us. In the meantime, I am a great prince. As regent to my nephew, I issued my writ to his falconer this morning, to deliver his thanks to —— Thornton, Esq., during the interregnum. I have declined the superintendence of the finances, and have only taken charge of the *menus plaisirs*. Alas! I try to smile, but my gaiety is forced. I have no time to do anything I like, and must now go and write to Charles Boone about a gentleman that is to reside with and have the care of my nephew, who is calm and does not alarm me, but they say the more likely to continue as he is.

1769. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1777.

If you wonder you have not heard from me *voici pourquoi*: I might plead business, but though I have enough,

[6] Lady Georgiana Fitzroy (afterwards Smyth), daughter of Lady Ossory by her first marriage.

Letter 1769.—Misplaced by C. amongst letters of 1778. (See *Notes and Queries*, July 23, 1898.)

that was not the impediment. The true reason why I have not written was, because I have. I wrote to you above a week agone, intending Mr. Montagu should be the bearer, and gave it to Mr. Stonhewer, but, lo! his friend was set out, and the former returned my epistle to me. As the news it contained would be still-born, instead of being so lazy as to send it, I begin anew.

You now know all the history of your warlike metropolitan, Archbishop Turpin [1]. I hope he made his entrance into his capital by beat of drum. If he attains what he deserves, and perhaps ambitions, a red hat, I shall beg to present him with that of his predecessor, Wolsey, out of my own museum; but I hope he will never be able to say with that son of a butcher, and with equal foundation from his pulpit, *Ego et Rex meus.* My brother, who is no American, is exceedingly scandalized at this champion of high Church. This vulture has been so plumed in both his flights, that I fancy his successor will learn to mix the prudence of the serpent with the timidity of the dove, and creep on his belly instead of soaring.

Your adversary Murray [2] is a blackguard. You may bear to have filth thrown at you, when it is at the Duchess of Devonshire and at the youngest and handsomest women in town. It is a polished, sweet-tempered age.

What care you about all the new promotions? or what cares anybody but the promoted and the disappointed? One of the latter, Lord Howe, is the only one worth naming.

[1] Dr. Markham, Archbishop of York. Horace Walpole refers to his violent speech in the House of Lords on May 30, 1777, in reply to the Duke of Grafton and Lord Shelburne. These lords had commented severely on the despotic principles expressed in a sermon of Markham's, preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel on Feb. 21, 1777.

[2] A Scotch bookseller who had pirated some of Gray's poems, and against whom Mason had commenced a Chancery suit. Murray published *A Letter to W. Mason, M.A., Precentor of York, concerning his Edition of Mr. Gray's Poems, and the Practices of Booksellers. By a Bookseller.*

He expected to be Treasurer of the Navy, because the appointments of Commanders-in-Chief and Ambassadors are not sufficient to content that family. Their sister[3] declares the quarrel is irreconcilable—it is a disinterested age.

I send you six *Gazettes Littéraires*: you needed not to celebrate the conveyance. Mr. S.[4] and I do not reckon you the pink of discretion.

I have almost finished the first volume of Dr. Robertson[5]. The materials are well put together, and it is a book that must please anybody to whom the matter is new. In short, it is not all so, and though the arrangement is good, I see no genius, no shrewdness, none of that penetration that shone in the *History of Scotland*, and totally left him in his *Charles V.* Two expressions have shocked me. Speaking of that indefatigable good man Las Casas[6], who laboured to rescue the poor Americans from the tyranny of their conquerors, the Doctor calls it a *bustling* activity, and says he was ashamed to show his face after the fatal termination of his *splendid* schemes. What epithets for so humane a design! Could Archbishop Markham, in a sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel by fire and sword, paint charity in more contemptuous terms? It is a Christian age.

I retract saying I have found nothing new: I did not know that great part of the Spanish clergy adopted the compassion of Las Casas. I did not know that Las Casas—and there he was culpably bustling indeed!—suggested the idea of supplying the Spanish settlements with African slaves. This was guilt with a witness; for any lucrative mischief has fifty times more chance of being adopted, than a humane plan that combats interest. What contradictions

[3] Hon. Caroline Howe.

[4] Mr. Stonhewer.

[5] *The History of America*, of which the first two volumes had recently appeared.

[6] Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566), Bishop of Chiapa, and 'Apostle of the Indians.'

we are! Las Casas had reason not to show [his] face, not because the one scheme failed, but because the other succeeded. Is not he a fine historian who insinuates that a virtuous man ought to blush if the perversity of the age defeats his efforts to correct it? The doctrine no doubt will be applauded by all who have rendered *patriots* an opprobrious term for those who laboured to prevent the effusion of English and American blood. It is a tender-hearted age.

My nephew continues sullen and calm. This saves me alarms, though not business and fatigue; yet I can get repose here, and now and then a moment to amuse myself. My Beauclerk tower is almost finished. Adieu!

1770. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 15, 1777.

I return your Ladyship the General's letter, and you may be assured will never name it. The applying to him, I am satisfied, was a better method than what I suggested; and I should hope, though he does not say so, that he will take some way of apprising his friends, as he must be sensible that it will be a kind office to all concerned for the young lady; if, as I should think by Lady Louisa's[1] account they are, they should not yet be aware that the affair is not at an end.

I am glad, Madam, you was contented with your progress, and saw so much. Kenilworth is very awful; yet what want of taste in the choice of the situation! The chimney-piece in the gate-house I perfectly remember; it has the Earl of Leicester's crest and devices, and I have often begged Lord Hyde to take care of it. It has too much of the degenerate Gothic, or I should have tried to purchase it, as the possessor loves money a little better than a

Letter 1770.—[1] Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick.

chimney-piece he neglects. Althorp is a great favourite of mine, from the number of portraits, its old simplicity, and being so connected with our story. I gave Miss Loyd several corrections to the catalogue of pictures, for they had mistaken several.

Lord Warwick, I think, may forgive me for condemning a modern steeple that only lives near him, when I have such reverence for his own castle.

My French dinner went off tolerably well, except that five or six of the invited disappointed me, and the table was not full. The Abbé Raynal not only looked at nothing himself, but kept talking to the Ambassador the whole time, and would not let him see anything neither. There never was such an impertinent and tiresome old gossip. He said to one of the Frenchmen, we ought to come abroad to make us love our own country. This was before Mr. Churchill, who replied very properly, 'Yes, we had some Esquimaux here lately, and they liked nothing because they could get no train-oil for breakfast.' Madame de Jarnac had a *migraine*, and Monsieur chose to keep her company.

I am glad you have heard of Mr. Fitzpatrick. You know there is another war in that part of the world: the Spaniards have taken an island on the coast of Brazil[2]: I do not believe we shall dare to frown.

My hexagon closet will be finished in a fortnight, and then I shall be at liberty to pay my duty at Ampthill. The Churchills tell me the town says Lady Elizabeth Conway is to be married to Sir Matthew Fetherstone.

Have you got through Dr. Robertson, Madam? I am not enchanted. There is a great affectation of philosophizing without much success. But there is one character that charms me, besides Las Casas, at whom the good doctor rather

[2] St. Catherine's Island, taken in Feb. 1777.

sneers; it is that of Pedro di Gasca[3], who was disinterested enough to make ten Parliaments blush. Do but imagine the satisfaction with which he must have retired with his poverty, after the great things he had done, when every other of his countrymen were cutting the throats of Americans for gold! He did not want to be Treasurer of the Navy, as well as general and pacificator[4]. I am delighted too with the ingratitude of the Spanish monarchs to all their heroic assassins. How fortunate the Otaheitans, to have no gold mines in their country!

1771. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, June 18, 1777.

I have let a month lapse without writing to you, which is seldom my custom or fault. Nothing momentous you may be sure has happened, or I should not have been silent. My thoughts have been taken up with my nephew, who gives no signs of amendment. After very mature deliberation I have positively refused to take charge of his affairs. You know most of my reasons already. Could I see any prospect of doing good, I should step over his behaviour to me; but as there is no chance of his treating me better, if he should have another lucid interval, as he probably will, I cannot consent to load myself with so much trouble, only to be again affronted at the end of it. Mr. Sharpe, the Countess's agent, has been wanting me to resume my function, in order to facilitate his letting one of her jointure farms: but what I will not do for my nephew, I will not do for her. Amidst all her professions, you know, my dear Sir, she was too cunningly insincere to trust me with serving her. She lost her boroughs by that

[3] Pedro de la Gasca (1485-1560), Bishop of Placencia, sent in 1546 on a mission of pacification to Peru.

[4] See pp. 59-60.

wise policy; I could have let this farm three years ago, and now they are at sea about it. They may settle it as they please or can—*she* has not the excuse of being out of her senses. And as to Mr. Sharpe, he traversed all my endeavours to serve her; and even now that he wants my assistance, invented a complaint of three years' standing, of which I never heard before, and in which I have made him own that I was not in the least to blame: the particulars are too long for a letter, nor worth repeating—but I have a little too much spirit to bear being distrusted, then accused, and still applied to. I did tell Mr. Sharpe it was extraordinary to find fault with me, and yet beg my assistance—but her Ladyship will never have it again. I showed her how incapable I was of not acting rightly by her. I never will do her any wrong; but I do not desire the ostentation of serving people who hate to employ me. It was always more agreeable to me to avoid power than to seek it; and I like to convince everybody, that, useful as I was to my Lord last time, I have more satisfaction in declining the government of his affairs than in conducting them.

The papers told you that Lord Chatham has again made his appearance[1]. In his place, I think I should not have done so. I should prefer being forgotten, to putting the world in mind of me without effect. He should sleep on his laurels, and leave posterity to make the comparison between him and his successors; who certainly are not prolific of trophies. Lord Cornwallis has gained a puny advantage, and Governor Tryon has burnt a magazine, which is thought a great blow to the provincials; but the Howes are not in fashion. Lord Percy is come home disgusted by the younger; and the elder will be as much disgusted, at least his family declare so for him, at missing

Letter 1771.—[1] On May 30, 1777, when he unsuccessfully moved an Address to the crown for the stoppage of the war in America.

the Treasurership of the Navy. The Duke of Marlborough's [2] avarice has been a theme of much abuse of late. I do not think this age has a right to cast a stone at the preceding. France to us sends most fair words; to America, stores and officers. Spain has seized an island from the Portuguese Queen; just as the powers of Europe treated the Empress-Queen on her father's death. I will not pity her Portuguese Majesty [3], lest some time or other she should accede to a partition of Poland. I will never more judge of princes at their coronations, but at their burials.

One effect the American war has not had, that it ought to have had; it has not brought us to our senses. Silly dissipation rather increases, and without an object. The present folly is late hours. Everybody tries to be particular by being too late; and, as everybody tries it, nobody is so. It is the fashion now to go to Ranelagh two hours after it is over. You may not believe this, but it is literal. The music ends at ten; the company go at twelve. Lord Derby's cook lately gave him warning. The man owned he liked his place, but he should be killed by dressing suppers at three in the morning. The Earl asked him coolly at how much he valued his life? That is, he would have paid him for killing him. You see we have brought the spirit of calculation to perfection! I do not regret being old, for I see nothing I envy. To live in a crowd, to arrive everywhere too late, and to sell annuities for forty times more than I can ever pay, are not such supreme joys as to make me wish myself young again: indeed, one might execute all these joys at fourscore. I am glad the Emperor did not visit us. I hope he is gone home, thinking France the most trifling nation in Europe.

[2] The great General of Queen Anne. *Walpole.*

[3] Maria, Queen of Portugal, who had recently succeeded her father, Joseph I.

I have received one of yours dated in May, but no day specified. I find you approve my not taking the direction of my nephew's affairs. I would if I had no reason but his insensibility, for one must do right without thinking of reward; and that of gratitude is an unnecessary one, as it is but the testimony of another to one's own conscience. He has had an interval, it is true, but it is my firm persuasion that he has not been perfectly in his senses from his youth; and can I expect that he who has never had any judgement should judge of me with rectitude? My reasons for declining are more substantial: I had no real authority before, and experienced I had not. He has put his affairs into the hands of a man of whom I think ill and have been forced to say so, and have no power to remove. This man and the crew may, on the first interval, make my Lord call in question and dispute all I might do. I would serve my Lord with my pains, but I will not pay for serving him. Lady Orford amused me with words, Mr. Sharpe threw every difficulty in my way. I had rather be wanted than ill-used.

I am extremely glad Lady Lucy[4] is so much mended, and I trust she will live to reward your nephew's great merit towards her. I do believe, with your physicians, that warm weather will re-establish you. Patience I need not preach to you—it is part of you; but I will tell you what would expedite your recovery miraculously—the sea-air. Go to Leghorn, and drive on the shore; go out in a boat for a few hours: you will walk well in half a dozen. I have experienced this in as short a time as I prescribe. You will be angry, perhaps,—I mean, as much as you can be,—but I am not sorry you have a little gout; it will be a great preservative.

[4] Lady Lucy Mann.

1772. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, June 19, 1777.

I thank you for your notices, dear Sir, and shall remember that on Prince William[1]. I did see the *Monthly Review*, but hope one is not guilty of the death of every man who does not make one the dupe of a forgery. I believe Mcpherson's success with *Ossian* was more the ruin of Chatterton than I. Two years passed between my doubting the authenticity of Rowley's poems and his death. I never knew he had been in London till some time after he had undone and poisoned himself there. The poems he sent me were transcripts in his own hand, and even in that circumstance he told a lie; he said he had them from the very person at Bristol to whom he had given them. If any man was to tell you that monkish rhymes had been dug up at Herculaneum, which was destroyed several centuries before there was any such poetry, should you believe it? Just the reverse is the case of Rowley's pretended poems. They have all the elegance of Waller and Prior, and more than Lord Surry—but I have no objection to anybody believing what he pleases. I think poor Chatterton was an astonishing genius—but I cannot think that Rowley foresaw metres that were invented long after he was dead, or that our language was more refined at Bristol in the reign of Henry V than it was at court under Henry VIII. One of the chaplains of the Bishop of Exeter has found a line of Rowley in *Hudibras*—the monk might foresee that too! The prematurity of Chatterton's genius is, however, full as wonderful, as that such a prodigy as Rowley should never have been heard of till the eighteenth century. The youth and industry of the former are miracles

Letter 1772.—[1] Prince William of Hatfield.

too, yet still more credible. There is not a symptom in the poems, but the old words, that savours of Rowley's age. Change the old words for modern, and the whole construction is of yesterday.

The other story you tell me is very credible and perfectly in character.

Yours ever,

H. W.

1773. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 29, 1777.

I am heartily vexed, Madam, at Lady Warwick's misadventure. See what comes of an education at Ampthill! Mr. Vernon, if he cares about grandchildren, should take away his daughters directly, or they will never have anything but peaches in brandy. The summer has made a *fausse-couche* too; I have no fruit, no flowers, no thrushes, no blackbirds. It is quite a folly to lay out vast sums in making landscapes in England; we have no weather to enjoy them, except one jubilee in five-and-twenty years. Our ancestors had more sense; they stuck themselves in a hole behind a hill, fenced out every wind with walls, and made a glass turret on the top of their mansions, not for a prospect, but to enjoy the few moments when the sun should condescend to come in person and look after his apple-orchards and hop-grounds. They were not so absurd as to import peaches, and nectarines, and pine-apples from the south, and Highlanders from the Orcades to look after them. Since we will give ourselves such torrid airs I wonder we do not go stark and tattoo ourselves. If I have got in our natural fruit, hay, and you will have a good fire of British oak, I purpose to wait on Lord Ossory and your Ladyship on the 16th or 17th of July, and instead of

brushing through dripping shrubberies, we will keep ourselves warm with hot cockles and blindman's-buff, and other old English sudorifics. My Lady Townshend, in the days of her wit, said that Mrs. Clive's face rose on Strawberry Hill and made it sultry; but I assure you, you may sit now in her beams when she is in her zenith without being tanned.

They say Lady Elizabeth Conway's match[1] is one of the apocryphal in the list of the forty couples which the town has laid out. I hope the other your Ladyship feared is so too. I wish any you wish may take place, but you shall not meddle a moment after the parson has said grace, for though you have the majesty of Juno, you shall never be invoked as Lucina. I even doubt whether little Guy would not have come to perfection, if you had not gone to Warwick Castle till autumn. In short, nothing can pacify me but a Lord Gowran. I wish Uncle Richard had stayed with you a month, and then who knows what a spiteful fit might have done!

I will try to take Crawfurd by storm, and hurry him into my chaise. If I give him warning, he will be sure of disappointing me.

Are you not glad, Madam, there is an end of talking of poor Dr. Dodd? I felt excessively for him, without a good opinion, for between the law and his friends, he suffered a thousand deaths. They say the tragedy of the father that accompanied the son, diverted most of the attention from Dr. Dodd.

A strange thing happened on Thursday, which I cannot tell you accurately, as it was translated to me through two or three very imperfect druggerwomen. He received a box in which were two or three small boxes. In the first a black one, in which he found a cornelian seal, with his

LETTER 1773.—[1] Lady Elizabeth Conway died unmarried in 1825.

own cipher and crest. Oh, I forgot to tell you *who* did—Mr. Child, of Osterley Park. With the seal was a writing, desiring him never to let the seal go out of his own hands. I was delighted, and concluded this was a talisman. No. In another box was a mourning-ring, with a topaz, others say an emerald, and some say the cornelian was an emerald. On the ring was a motto in Latin, implying, 'Keep this in memory of a dying friend.' There was a third box, or there was not, and nobody knows what was in it, whether there was one or not. The cabalists are of opinion, as the delivery was made on the eve of Dr. Dodd's death, that the bequest was his, and that the seal implies that there is a forgery to come out on Mr. Child.

I am too late for the post, and, as I must go to town on Tuesday, I shall keep my letter till then, as it will have but one stage instead of two, with the chance of a post-script.

Le voici ce postscript.—I am *au fait* of Mr. Child's mysterious present; I mean the circumstances, not the solution of the enigma, which it would be a pity to know yet. The first was a cornelian seal, with R. C., and Mr. Child's crest, and these words, *Nemini confide sigillum.* No. 2 was a mourning-ring, with a topaz seal, cipher and crest as above, and round it this oracular sentence, *Anchora sacra decepit*, which leave a charming latitude of guessing.

Oh, but here is another event more inexplicable still!—a letter has been sent to the club at Stapleton's, directed to 'L. S. D.' No mortal man could be found to expound those letters: not an Œdipus in the whole society. At last a great adept, the sage John Manners, claimed the letter. His title was contested, for, though few clubs are Academies of Inscriptions, the members were clear-sighted enough to see that L. S. D. did not signify John Manners. However, he pleaded his great experience in pounds, shillings, and

pence, and insisted that the hieroglyphic letters in question, standing for those denominations, were more likely to be addressed to him than to any fellow of the society; and as far as great industry in appropriating to himself the things typified, nobody could deny the proposition; but as such a precedent would be too dangerous, and might encourage him to seize every piece of paper that commenced with these letters, the occult packet is put in sequestration, and hitherto no man has ventured to break the seal.

1774. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, July 6, 1777.

There is a blacker cloud than the rain come over my prospects, Madam, and I must wait its explosion! Without a figure, there is little chance of my being able to wait on you on the 16th, or sooner, which I see would be more convenient. A courier arrived yesterday from the Duchess of Gloucester to fetch Dr. Jebb and Adair to the Duke, though with little probability of their arriving time enough. We had heard he was ill, and that the surgeon that attends him had advised his setting out immediately for England, the heats of Italy having done him infinite prejudice. I believe the continual change of air and motion were the chief objects in view. He grew every day so much worse that he was put into his post-chaise and removed from Verona, but the Duchess says she did not expect he would be able to get beyond the first post. To overwhelm her completely, the little Prince[1] is not in a much better state. The distress of my poor nieces[2], who doat on their mother, and of my brother with his two sons-in-law[3] so ill, and

Letter 1774.—[1] Prince William Frederick of Gloucester.

[2] The Ladies Waldegrave.

[3] The Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Exeter; the latter died in Dec. 1777.

with his two daughters in so melancholy a situation, calls for all the little comfort I am able to give them, and I dare not think of pleasing myself when there are such afflictions in my family. I will not dwell on these misfortunes. You are so good as to be amused with my idle gossiping, but I have no right to put your sensibility to different trials.

I have heard no more of the mysterious packets, nor indeed of anything else. I have no correspondents in town, and my French one[4] does not trouble her head with anything beyond her own circle. I believe nothing I read in the newspapers about America; indeed they are arrived at a pitch of ignorance that would not be excusable in Greenland. They acquainted us last week, with great solemnity, that the Duchess of Queensberry was the famous Catherine Howard:—they might as well have said she was Anne Boleyn. My humble opinion is, that we shall never recover America, and that France will take care that we shall never recover ourselves. What scratches we may give or receive, *en attendant*, seem very little to the purpose; probably we shall tumble into a war with France before the latter quite intends it, though she may not care much if we do, and then we shall be frightened out of our senses, or into them, when it is too late. But all this is no business of mine, who have lived my time, and do not, as old folks often do, propose to govern the world after I am out of it. Few persons know when they should die; I mean when they should have done living. I have taken up my strulbrugship, only reserving a comfortable annuity of cheerfulness and amusement, as monarchs do who resign their crowns, and intend to have all the pleasures of royalty without the cares; but as Care never accedes to that compact, their majesties, and I their ape, find ourselves

[4] Madame du Deffand.

mistaken. You see storms reach my little hill, as well as Mount Athos.

I wish your Ladyship had entered farther into criticisms on Dr. Robertson. I dare to answer I should approve them as much as Lord Ossory does. The very word *critical* is indeed a commentary. His philosophic solutions are as paltry as possible. You are, in good truth, a more real philosopher, Madam, when you can smile over such a mishap as you relate, and

Be mistress of yourself, though glasses break!

My little hexagon has been more fortunate, and is finished without an accident. I trust it will draw a visit from your Ladyship; you defrauded me of one this spring. If I should receive any good news from my unhappy Duchess, I shall not give up the 16th; if not, I must defer it to a moment when I shall be more at liberty.

P.S. Another letter is come, dated three days later, with better accounts. The Duke had borne a journey of two days very well, and slept eight hours. If these good symptoms continue, I shall treat myself with keeping my engagement. Mr. Beauclerk and Lady Di dined here to-day; he looks so much less ill than he did, that one need never despair of any recovery after his and Lazarus's.

1775. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, July 6, 1777.

I don't know anybody so much in the wrong as you are for not coming to me this summer; you would see such a marvellous closet, so small, so perfect, so respectable; you would swear it came out of Havering in the Bower, and that Catherine de Valois used to retire into it to

write to Owen Tudor. Lady Di's drawings—no offence to yours—are hung on Indian blue damask, the ceiling, door, and surbase are gilt, and in the window are two brave *fleur de lis* and a lion of England, all royally crowned in painted glass, which as Queen Catherine never did happen to write a *billet doux* in this closet, signify Beauclerc, the denomination of the tower. This cabinet is to be sacred and not shown to the profane, as the drawings are not for the eyes of the vulgar. Yours shall have a place, which is the greatest honour I can do them. Miss Pope[1] the actress, who is at Mrs. Clive's, dined here yesterday, and literally shed tears, though she did not know the story. I think this is more to Lady Di's credit, than a tomtit pecking at painted fruit. The ceiling was fortunately finished some time ago. My plasterer is turned raving Methodist, and has sent me a frantic letter without sense or grammar, but desiring leave to open me a new plan of the Gospel. I am glad he had no *new light* about making stucco!

Those gentry the Methodists will grow very troublesome, or worse; they were exceedingly unwilling to part with that impudent hypocrite, Dr. Dodd, and not less, to have forgery criminal. I own I felt very much for the poor wretch's protracted sufferings—but that was not the motive of their countenance; I cannot bear a militant arch-inquisitor, or an impostor in a tabernacle. Thank you for your reply to the former, &c.

I have no more *Gazettes Littéraires*, or *Politiques*. Linguet[2], the outcast of France, has published one here that makes some noise; part is satire on us, part panegyric, but in general very superficial. I have an anecdote apropos to him that is very curious. I will tell it you some day or other, but as it is a secret, I must not communicate it to the post office.

LETTER 1775.—[1] Jane Pope (1742-1818), the original 'Mrs. Candour' in *The School for Scandal*.

[2] Simon Nicolas Henri Linguet (1736-1794), historian. He had lately been imprisoned in the Bastille.

They have sent me from town a fourth volume of the *Archæologia,* or Old Women's Logic; the first paragraph is as complete nonsense as my plasterer's letter.

Don't let this horrid weather put you out of humour with your *Garden,* though I own it is pity we should have brought gardening to perfection, and have too bad a climate to enjoy it. It is strictly true this year, as I have often said, that ours is the most beautiful country in the world, when framed and glazed; but remember you can make the sun shine when you please, and as much as you please, and yet the verdure of your garden will be ever green. You are an excellent parish priest, catechize and make terriers, I believe, in perfection; but pray do not forget poor poetry, your natural vocation, as you have done so long; but you must be everything, an inventor of musical instruments, a painter, and a law suitor—

Besides a hundred freaks that died in thinking.

Well, I cannot help loving you with all your faults and all your perfections.

I am just now in great trouble, though a little relieved to-day by a better account. The Duke of Gloucester is extremely ill, and my poor niece in despair! They are coming if they can to England for a little time, as the heat of the south is too mighty for him. How dear has ambition cost her! Adieu.

As it is right to be impartial, which I am not naturally, I must tell you that at the end of the new *Archæologia* there is a very good essay on ancient castles, with very curious matter, by a Mr. King[3]. I don't know who he is—but it rains again, and there is no bearing it.

[3] Edward King (d. 1807), barrister and miscellaneous writer. He was for a short time President of the Society of Antiquaries.

1776. To Viscount Nuneham.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1777.

As I know your Lordship and Lady Nuneham are so good as to interest yourselves about the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of telling you, that, though the express on Saturday was as bad as possible, yet another letter yesterday from the Duke's surgeon, dated three days later, brought a more favourable account. His Royal Highness had been taken out of bed and put into a post-chaise, as it was thought nothing but change of air and motion could save him. He bore the travelling for two days very well, and got eight hours of sleep. The third day he was less well from fatigue, but the surgeon did not think him otherwise worse. I hope in God this alarm will pass off like the former!—but nothing, except her own words, could paint the agonies of the Duchess. She is alarmed too for the little Prince. They are coming to England, but not to stay, as Italian winters agree with the Duke, though the summers are so prejudicial.

Now I have taken this liberty, my dear Lord, I must take a little more; you know my old admiration and envy are your garden. I do not grudge Pomona or Sir James Cockburn their hothouses, nor intend to ruin myself by raising sugar and water in tanner's bark and peach skins. The Flora Nunehamica is the height of my ambition, and if your Linnæus should have any disciple that would condescend to look after my little flower-garden, it would be the delight of my eyes and nose, provided the cataracts of heaven are ever shut again! Not one proviso do I make, but that the pupil be not a Scot. We had peace and warm weather before the inundation of that northern

people, and therefore I beg to have no Attila for my gardener.

Apropos, don't your Lordship think that another set of legislators, the Maccaronis and Maccaronesses, are very wise? People abuse them for turning days, nights, hours, and seasons topsy-turvy; but surely it was upon mature reflection. We had a set of customs and ideas borrowed from the continent that by no means suited our climate. Reformers bring back things to their natural course. Notwithstanding what I said in spite in the paragraph above, we are in truth but Greenlanders and ought to conform to our climate. We should lay in store of provisions and candles and masquerades and coloured lamps for ten months in the year, and shut out our twilight and enjoy ourselves. In September and October we may venture out of our ark and make our hay and gather in our corn, and go to horse-races, and kill pheasants and partridges for stock for our winter's supper. I sailed in a skiff and pair this morning to Lady Cecilia Johnston, and found her, like a good housewife, sitting over her fire, with her cats and dogs and birds and children. She brought out a dram to warm me and my servants, and we were very merry and comfortable. As Lady Nuneham has neither so many two-footed or four-footed cares upon her hands, I hope her hands have been better employed.

I wish I could peep over her shoulder one of these wet mornings!

Adieu, my dear Lord; forgive all my babble. Yesterday's letter raised my spirits, and I love to impart my satisfaction to those I love, which, with all due respect, I must take leave to say I feel for you, and am most sincerely, &c.

1777. To George Hardinge.

Strawberry Hill, July 9, 1777.

You have long been good and kind to me, dear Sir. This new instance of your friendship is the kindest of all, and is not sown in barren ground. The choice the young lady [1] has made gives me a more favourable opinion of her than all your encomiums. I hope she will make you happy: and I will answer for your making her so, and that is a great deal in favour of the match; for I am of opinion that nine unhappy marriages in ten spring from faults on the husband's side. Women acquire liberty by marrying, find themselves happier than they were, and love the author. But men either perfidiously do not intend to confine themselves, or grow weary of the restraint: and the chains on our side are so easily shaken off, and so little shame attends the resumption of our liberty, that it is no wonder voluntary prisoners do not remain long in prison. You see, as partial as I am to you, I shall still be ready to think you to blame if you do not continue as happy as you seem to be at present. You are not quite young enough to have made an inconsiderable choice: the approbation of your family says you have not, and it is like your good sense to be pleased with their satisfaction. Your naming me favourably to the young lady, though a strain of friendship far beyond my merit, is another evidence of your good heart, and what I hope she will not think a mark of too much partiality in your disposition; for I wish her to respect your judgement as much as your other good qualities, and I doubt this is not the best proof you can give; yet she

Letter 1777.—Not in C.; reprinted from Nichols' *Illustrations of Literary History*, vol. iii. p. 200.

[1] Lucy, daughter and heiress of Richard Long, of Hinxton, Cambridgeshire, to whom Hardinge was married on Oct. 20, 1777.

will have the better opinion of mine for knowing how early I received them.

I can but wish you all the happiness and success I have long wished you, but I am glad you have new incitement to ambition, and the exercise of your talents. A marriage is likely to improve felicity when the wife has continual occasions of increasing her respect for her husband. I must do the ladies another piece of justice, which is to observe, that the wives of great men are generally excellent wives, and attached to their glory. The inference on the contrary is, that contempt is one cause of faults in the woman. I have certainly not thought much on the subject of matrimony, and perhaps my remarks may be more new than just; perhaps, too, observations suggested by common sense extempore are likely to be as true as those made on commonplace topics by premeditation. I have zeal enough to have sent you a better Epithalamium. It might have had compliments better turned: but wit or poetry would not have expressed my sincerity; and I am too old to write anything but what I think. So, be congratulated as you will, you will receive none more from the heart than these warm good wishes of, dear Sir,

Yours most cordially,
HOR. WALPOLE.

1778. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, July 10, 1777.

DON'T be alarmed at this thousandth letter in a week. This is more to Lady Hamilton[1] than to you. Pray tell her I have seen *Monsieur la Bataille d'Agincourt*[2]. He

LETTER 1778.—[1] The first wife of Sir William Hamilton, Envoy Extraordinary at the court of Naples. *Walpole.*

[2] M. le Chevalier d'Agincourt, a French antiquary, long settled in Italy. *Walpole.*

brought me her letter yesterday: and I kept him to sup, *sleep* in the modern phrase, and breakfast here this morning; and flatter myself he was, as she will be, content with the regard I paid to her letter.

The weather is a thought warmer to-day, and I am as busy as bees are about their hay. My *Hayssians*[3] have cost me as much as if I had hired them of the Landgrave.

I am glad your invasion is blown over. I fear I must invite those flat-bottomed vessels hither, as the Swissess Necker has directed them to the port of Twickenham. Madame de Blot is too fine, and Monsieur Schomberg[4] one of the most disagreeable, cross, contemptuous savages I ever saw. I have often supped with him at the Duchesse de Choiseul's, and could not bear him; and now I must be *charmé*, and *pénétré*, and *comblé*, to see him: and I shall act it very ill, as I always do when I don't do what I like. Madame Necker's letter is as affected and *précieuse*, as if Marmontel had written it for a Peruvian milkmaid. She says I am a philosopher, and as like Madame de Sévigné as two peas—who was as unlike a philosopher as a gridiron. As I have none of Madame de Sévigné's natural easy wit, I am rejoiced that I am no more like a philosopher neither, and still less like a *philosophe*; which is a being compounded of D'Urfey and Diogenes, a pastoral coxcomb, and a supercilious brute.

1779. To Robert Jephson.

Strawberry Hill, July 13, 1777.

You have perhaps, Sir, paid too much regard to the observations I took the liberty to make, by your order, to a few passages in *Vitellia*, and I must hope they were in consequence of your own judgement too. I do not doubt of

[3] Hessians. *Walpole.*
[4] Charles, Comte de Schomberg. He was a friend of Voltaire.

its success on the stage, if well acted; but I confess I would answer for nothing with the present set of actors, who are not capable in tragedy of doing any justice to it. Mrs. Barry[1] seems to me very unequal to the principal part, to which Mrs. Yates alone is suited. Were I the author, I should be very sorry to have my tragedy murdered, perhaps miscarry. Your reputation is established; you will never forfeit it yourself—and to give your works to unworthy performers is like sacrificing a daughter to a husband of bad character. As to my offering it to Mr. Colman, I could merely be the messenger. I am scarce known to him, have no right to ask a favour of him, and I hope you know me enough to think that I am too conscious of my own insignificance and private situation to give myself an air of protection, and more particularly to a work of yours, Sir. What could I say, that would carry greater weight, than 'This piece is by the author of *Braganza*'?

A tragedy can never suffer by delay: a comedy may, because the allusions or the manners represented in it may be temporary. I urge this, not to dissuade your presenting *Vitellia* to the stage, but to console you if both theatres should be engaged next winter. My own interests, from my time of life, would make me with reason more impatient than you to see it represented, but I am jealous of the honour of your poetry, and I should grieve to see *Vitellia* at Covent Garden—not that, except Mrs. Yates, I have any partiality to the tragic actors at Drury Lane, though Smith did not miscarry in *Braganza*—but I speak from experience. I attended *Caractacus* last winter, and was greatly interested, both from my friendship for Mr. Mason and from the excellence of the poetry. I was out of all patience; for though a young Lewis[2] played a subordinate part very well,

LETTER 1779.—[1] Widow of the actor, Spranger Barry; she married one Crawford in 1778, and died in 1801.

[2] William Thomas Lewis (d. 1811), known as 'Gentleman Lewis.'

and Mrs. Hartley looked her part charmingly, the Druids were so massacred, and Caractacus so much worse, that I never saw a more barbarous exhibition. Instead of hurrying *The Law of Lombardy*, which, however, I shall delight to see finished, I again wish you to try comedy. To my great astonishment there were more parts performed admirably in *The School for Scandal* than I almost ever saw in any play. Mrs. Abington was equal to the first of her profession, Yates (the husband), Parsons[3], Miss Pope, and Palmer[4], all shone. It seemed a marvellous resurrection of the stage. Indeed, the play had as much merit as the actors. I have seen no comedy that comes near it since *The Provoked Husband*.

I said I was jealous of your fame as a poet, and I truly am. The more rapid your genius is, labour will but the more improve it. I am very frank, but I am sure that my attention to your reputation will excuse it. Your facility in writing exquisite poetry may be a disadvantage; as it may not leave you time to study the other requisites of tragedy so much as is necessary. Your writings deserve to last for ages; but to make any work last, it must be finished in all parts to perfection. You have the first requisite to that perfection, for you can sacrifice charming lines, when they do not tend to improve the whole. I admire this resignation so much, that I wish to turn it to your advantage. Strike out your sketches as suddenly as you please, but retouch and retouch them, that the best judges may for ever admire them. The works that have stood the test of ages, and been slowly approved at first, are not those that have dazzled contemporaries and borne away their applause, but those whose intrinsic and laboured merit have shone the brighter

[3] William Parsons (1736–1795), the original 'Crabtree' in *The School for Scandal*.

[4] John Palmer (d. 1798), the original 'Joseph Surface.'

on examination. I would not curb your genius, Sir, if I did not trust it would recoil with greater force for having obstacles presented to it.

You will forgive my not having sent you the *Thoughts on Comedy*, as I promised. I have had no time to look them over and put them into shape. I have been and am involved in most unpleasant affairs of family, that take up my whole thoughts and attention. The melancholy situation of my nephew Lord Orford engages me particularly, and I am not young enough to excuse postponing business and duties for amusement. In truth, I am really too old not to have given up literary pleasures. Nobody will tell one when one grows dull, but one's time of life ought to tell it one. I long ago determined to keep the archbishop in *Gil Blas* in my eye, when I should advance to his caducity; but as dotage steals in at more doors than one, perhaps the sermon I have been preaching to you is a symptom of it. You must judge of that, Sir. If I fancy I have been wise, and have only been peevish, throw my lecture into the fire. I am sure the liberties I have taken with you deserve no indulgence, if you do not discern true friendship at the bottom of them.

1780. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Arlington Street, July 15, 1777.

I have barely time to write a line, and it is to thank your Ladyship for your very kind letter, which I will obey the first instant I am at liberty. I came to town this morning on business with my brother, for Lord Orford is no better, and everything is in confusion. I had a letter from the Duchess; the Duke had had a tolerable night, and she begins to hope the crisis is over, but he still keeps his bed, and is as weak as possible. The hot weather, and my ocean of troubles, serious or trifling, affect my nerves

so, that I can scarce write. I am a fine Hercules to think of doing twenty times more than I have strength for.

1781. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, July 17, 1777.

You are very kind, my dear Sir, in your inquiries about the Duke of Gloucester. You will have heard, long before you receive this, how very ill his Royal Highness has been. I wish I could say I was yet quite easy about him. We are very impatient for to-morrow's letters. It is unfortunate that he did not pass the summer again at Castel Gondolfo[1]. The heats and nauseous air of Venice immediately affected him deeply, and I fear his Royal Highness's mind was not in a situation to resist outward impressions[2]. He fell away exceedingly, had a flux at Padua, and at Verona was so reduced, that he was persuaded to return to England. Before he could set out, he grew daily so much worse, that he was taken out of bed and put into a post-chaise, and made journeys for two days of twenty-six and thirty miles; at the end of which he slept eight hours, and mended a little. The Duchess, in the meantime, half distracted, sent a courier for Dr. Jebb and Adair; who, we hope, arrived last Saturday; for Dr. Jebb promised to post without pulling off his clothes. The Duke got to Trent, and found himself refreshed from the cool air of the mountains: but his dysentery returned with violent pains. He keeps his bed; but when the last letters came away, which was on the 4th of this month, his surgeon-page hoped the extremity of the danger was over. It is, indeed, impossible ever to be secure about so precarious a constitution;

Letter 1781.—[1] A country house near Rome belonging to the Pope.

[2] He was depressed by the treatment he had met with from the King, and by his failure to secure a provision for his children.

and, unless his Royal Highness's mind is set at peace about his family, I fear he has not strength to resist the anxiety that preys upon a state of health too obnoxious to every kind of attack. To add to the Duchess's misery, her little boy was in a bad way at the same moment—but he has cut a tooth, and has another coming, and they hope the disorder arose thence.

You inquire about America, and what Lord Percy[3] says. I cannot give you information from any authority. I live here, and see nobody of either side that knows anything. The Duchess's three daughters[4] are, by his Royal Highness's goodness, lodged in Hampton Court Park, which is very near me, and take up most of my time. They are charming girls: I don't mean only their persons, but good, sweet-tempered, admirably brought up, and amiable in every respect. I try to amuse and improve them; though I have little to do on the latter head, and they are so reasonable and easily contented, even with the company of an old uncle, that even the other is not difficult. But what is all this to America, except that it proves how little it occupies me? The last *Gazette* informed us that General Howe was but then going to open the campaign, having been in want of campaign equipage. I do not know that Lord Percy says anything; for I have heard he is very circumspect. He certainly does not talk of pacification. He is said to say that this campaign will finish the war. I doubt his having said so, as the ministers are not said to be of that opinion. In the meantime, American privateers infest our coasts; they keep Scotland in alarms, and even the harbour of Dublin has been newly strengthened with cannon. But there is a much bigger cloud ready to burst. The open

[3] Earl Percy returned from America in consequence of a disagreement with General Howe.

[4] The Ladies Laura, Maria, and Horatia Waldegrave, daughters of the Duchess of Gloucester by her first husband, James, Earl Waldegrave *Walpole.*

protection and countenance given by France to the Americans is come to a crying height. We complain: I know not what civil words they give, but they certainly give us no satisfaction. The general opinion is, that we are at the eve of a war with them. Should the Americans receive any blow, my own sentiments are, that France would openly espouse their quarrel, not being at all disposed to let them be crushed. You know that at the beginning of this contest I told you I thought it would be an affair of long duration. A French war would abridge it—but how? I will prophesy nothing on that head. I don't like to look into that book.

You tell me Lady O. has been very ill. I wish her no ill, but *au reste* am most indifferent about her. Her son seems to be sunk into a low-spirited sullen state. We have now very sultry weather, and as he does not grow furious, Dr. Monroe thinks it indicates fixed madness. The faculty will certainly not pronounce in a hurry again. Sir Edward and I will as certainly take no steps of any kind, but wait the course of the disorder with patience. We are in no haste to meddle. They who excluded us from my Lord's confidence will not have much reason to rejoice in their triumph. Lady O., who would not trust me, already feels the inconvenience of having waived my services—if Mr. Sharpe sends her true accounts. It is no business of mine whether he does or not.

I am exceedingly glad of the improved accounts you send me of Lady Lucy's health, and of the comfort she and your nephew are to you. I knew how much you would like him, and then how much you would love him. I hope he will have a little boy for you to love too, especially as it will be a proof of Lady Lucy's perfect recovery.

I have no events to send you. London, I suppose, is very empty at this season; but I have little dealings

with it. The affairs of my family find me full employment, and it is the most suitable one at my time of life. Adieu!

1782. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Saturday night, July 19, 1777.

I would have given sixpence for a quarter of an hour this morning to have answered your Ladyship's letter, but three persons dropped in one after another, and kept me till I was too late to dress, and so I made Mr. Morrice wait half an hour for dinner. It was a party made for Lady Blandford, who at last did not come, nor Lady Jane Scott, who was gone to town to buy mourning for the Duchess of Queensberry, who died on Thursday of a surfeit of cherries, as my old Countess of Desmond of robbing a walnut-tree, for the Duchess's beauty at seventy-seven was as extraordinary as the other's at hundred and forty years.

I am now positively, and ultimately, and unputoffably determined, if you will let me, to be at Ampthill on Tuesday se'nnight. The Duke of Gloucester is better, and again set out; but I have so much to do this week that I cannot get away sooner, and I think the day I named comes within the time prescribed before Lord Ossory's journey to the north. I have made no idle excuses, for you see I have not stirred an inch from home this whole summer. Two days ago I did fear the gout was coming: I had walked too much in the heat, and as exercise always hurts me, I waked in the night in great pain; but it is gone, and, I trust, for some time.

I heartily pity Mr. Fitzpatrick[1] for being engaged in this

Letter 1782.—[1] Fitzpatrick joined his regiment in America in March 1777.

abominable war, that is big with another, and both with ruin. Nobody do I see but holds that with France unavoidable, since they are determined to try how much we will bear; and I hear of ministers, and of more ministerlings who would be fain thought to have had no share in the culpability of our measures. I am sure they who have not had, have cause to congratulate themselves. My cousin, Dick Walpole, one of my this morning's visitors, told me there is a fresh account of Lord Cornwallis's defeat; if true, it is not owned. Lord Dysart has lost his youngest brother William[2], whose ship the *Repulse*, with all in it, an hundred and fifty! sunk in a storm on the 26th of *last December*. This shows what early and certain intelligence we get from America! Lady Bridget[3], whom I do not quote as gospel, told me last night that it is far from certain that Lord Mulgrave[4] is safe. I doubt, as the Apocalypse says, the seals of the last book are not opened yet!

1783. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1777.

You know I do not stand upon debtor and creditor with you, but should have indulged my pleasure of writing to you, if I had been master of a moment's leisure or peace of mind. The various distresses and misfortunes of my family have engrossed me entirely. My nephew continues to fluctuate between violence and stupidity; as the last is not alarming, and there are scarce hopes of any comfortable recovery, I am inclined to wish it took place totally. In the meantime his affairs are as distracted, and have driven

[2] Hon. William Tollemache.

[3] Lady Bridget Tollemache.

[4] Constantine John Phipps (1744–1792), second Baron Mulgrave. He was a captain in the navy, and in 1773 was appointed to the command of the *Racehorse*, sent out with the *Carcass* to discover a northern route to India.

me into a paper war with his agent. The Duke of Gloucester is still exceedingly ill; Dr. Jebb flatters us he shall bring him to England, but promises nothing more. The Bishop of Exeter has been dying these nine months, but at last seems recovering. All these calamities and their consequential details have left me no time for amusement or attention to anything else, and unless American privateers attack Hampton Court, I shall forget almost that there are thirteen colonies. In good truth they seem fully able to take care of themselves, nay, at leisure to return our invasions. If they burn Edinburgh, I shall not cry fire.

Lord John Cavendish is returned from a visit to his sister[1] in Ireland, and gives a droll description of Viceroy Buckingham's entrenchments, which are not quite so strong as Dictator Washington's, except in gin-shops. The rest of the encampment consists in three tents. The Ossianites[2] rave against Howe. Madame de Noailles, the Ambassador's wife, arrives to-day with a sprig, I believe, of rue in her mouth merely to keep her from laughing. Cunningham[3] sailed from Dunkirk with orders to be very civil till in wide ocean, but mistook the Channel for it, and made nine prizes, which if he sent to Dunkirk will obtain his pardon. I heard this morning that France has fifteen thousand men in India, who I suppose have orders not to take Bengal within sight of the French coast. A good courtisan told me last night, as a counterpoise to all these *unforeseen accidents*, that Lord Chatham has had a fall from his horse, in a fit. The bells are ringing—perhaps on that account.

I have no more *Gazettes Littéraires* yet, but I have a new

Letter 1783. —[1] Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, second daughter of third Duke of Devonshire; m. (1742) Hon. John Ponsonby, second son of first Earl of Bessborough.

[2] The Scotch.

[3] The captain of an American privateer, who in April 1777 took and brought into Dunkirk an English packet boat carrying the King's messenger and mails.

work that I will lend you, that you will read, though very tiresome and ill written, printed here by some of the excrement of Paris. It is called *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'Histoire de la République des Lettres en France depuis* 1762 *jusqu'à nos jours*[4]. It is a journal of all the minor politics, literature, theatric anecdotes, scandal and fashions of that country, and as all those heads compose much of their politics, it is the history of everything but their foreign politics. There are eight thick duodecimos, ill written, with no judgement, and very partial, almost against everybody and thing, however it shows them, and that they make little better figure than we do, though we are so low! I think a man of sense and taste should blush to be talked of in either country. I think you are too difficult, however, about the *Ode*[5] and the *Epistle to Shebbeare*, which will survive when all our trash is forgotten. What do you think of the immortal lines on Cox's Museum[6]? I beg your pardon too, if I cannot see the sin of omission in some lines of Horace[7] not being paraphrased in so heinous a light. The author does not profess a translation, and surely was at liberty to take only what parts he found to his purpose. If I had time, I dare to say I could prove to you that the *Ode* is a stricter imitation than those of Pope; but alas! I have other guess *besogne*; however, to show you I have not totally abandoned all the occupations I love, I will mention an instance I chanced upon t'other day of the barbarity of the French language in poetry. I happened to open a volume of Voltaire at Lord Ossory's, and found this beginning of a scene in one of his plays:—

Enfin donc désormais.

[4] By Louis Petit de Bachaumont (1690–1771).

[5] An *Ode to Sir Fletcher Norton*, and an *Epistle to Dr. Shebbeare*, published by Mason in 1777 under the name of Malcolm Macgregor.

[6] Lines 204–21 of the *Epistle*.

[7] An allusion to a note of Mason's on the *Ode*.

Match me that hemistich if you can in a tragedy of the Sauromatæ.

Garrick is dying of the yellow jaundice on the success of Henderson[8], a young actor from Bath—*Enfin donc désormais* there must never be a good player again. As Voltaire and Garrick are the god and goddess of Envy, the latter would put a stop to procreation, as the former would annihilate the traces of all antiquity, if there were no other gods but they.

I do not wonder you have had such bad crops both in your meadows and in chancery; consider how long since any sun shone on either. My *Hayssians* have cost me as much as if I had hired them of the Landgrave. One would think the elements this summer came from Scotland too; and I am surprised Sir John Dalrymple or Macpherson has not told us from the *dépôt des affaires étrangères*, that the sun is an enemy to English constitutions. *Vivent les brouillards!* I will finish with anticipating the best trait in the books I promise you. The witty Piron made a visit to that old bigot, the Archbishop of—(not York, but) Paris, soon after his issuing a thundering mandate against some French Whigs, of which his Grace had certainly not written one word. He asked Piron, 'L'avez-vous lu?'—'Oui, Monseigneur, et vous?'

Yours ever,

H. W.

1784. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 8, 1777.

My incorrect impromptu deserved no thanks, Madam; nor should I have sent it but as it proved I left you with regret. I can snatch but moments for anything I like.

[8] John Henderson (1745–1785), whose reputation in his day was second only to that of Garrick.

I had chalked out a more pleasing plan for this part of my life, but it is sadly traversed, and I must submit. I received a most melancholy account yesterday of my nephew, who seems sinking into idiocy, and picks up straws. This state will be free from alarms, but probably will involve me again in the care of his affairs; however, I shall wait with patience for some certainty, nor embark without better authority than I did last time. I am not more easy about the Duke, whose situation is still very perilous; and if I did not know Dr. Jebb for the most despondent of men, my hopes would be small indeed; yet I by no means despair. I must count my pleasures too with my pains. My niece's[1] match with Lord Cadogan, since she herself approves it, gives me great satisfaction. She is one of the best and most discreet young women in the world, and her husband, I am sure, is fortunate. You will think I have been mysterious, but believe me, I did not know it till yesterday. I had expected it, but was grown to think it would not be. Lord Suffolk is certainly to marry Lady Aylesford's daughter, Lady Charlotte[2]. She cannot complain of being made a nurse, for he could have no other reason for marrying her, she is so plain, and I suppose he knows she is good or sensible. I said so to Lady Bridget Tollemache, and she replied, 'How does one know whether a homely young woman is good or not before she is married?'—She is in the right.

It was Sir Charles and not George Montagu that is dead, as my hostess of St. Albans told me. Lord Villiers, who has fashioned away all he has, is to remove with his wife to his mother's[3], and live there. This was a great match.

LETTER 1784.—[1] Mary, daughter of Colonel Churchill; m. (Aug. 1777) third Baron (afterwards first Earl) Cadogan, from whom she was divorced in 1798.

[2] Lady Charlotte Finch, eldest daughter of third Earl of Aylesford; m. (Aug. 1777) Henry Howard, twelfth Earl of Suffolk; d. 1808.

[3] Countess Grandison.

I am glad Lord Cadogan is past one-and-twenty, and wish all my nieces may marry fathers rather than sons.

Have you read General Burgoyne's rhodomontade[4], in which he almost promises to cross America in a hop, step, and a jump? I thought we were cured of hyperboles. He has sent over, too, a copy of his talk with the Indians, which they say is still more supernatural. I own I prefer General Howe's taciturnity, who at least, if he does nothing, does not break his word. It is supposed the latter is sailed to Boston, and that the former has kicked Ticonderoga into one of the lakes—I don't know which, I am no geographer.

I met the new French Ambassadress t'other night at the Prince of Masserano's, at Isleworth. She is a little mouse in a cheese, not ugly, but with no manner. I am glad summer is come along with her; I began to think it was taken by a privateer.

I am not going to make a job of you, Madam, nor to sell my friends to my relations, but I do wish you had Lord Villiers's house, and hope the name of the street[5] will be no objection. It is brave, magnificently furnished, and in good taste. If Lord Ossory could get the lease, the furniture would be an immense pennyworth, as it has not been violated but by one ball and three or four assemblies. The rent, 450*l.*, is but the odd fifty beyond your present palace. It is seriously worth thinking about. There is a noble hall and staircase, an excellent drawing-room to the street, vast eating-room, and another chamber. On the first floor an anteroom, and three more very large rooms all four quintessenced with Adamitic mode, and yet not filigreed into puerility like l'Hôtel de Derby. The back-stairs to the second floor, I am told, are bad; but must children and servants go to bed up

[4] A manifesto addressed to the revolted colonists.

[5] Grafton Street, which might remind Lady Ossory of her first marriage.

the steps of the Capitol? Remember, nobody is in town, and this scarce known. I would advise Lord Ossory to seize the moment, were it but to sell again. Lord Buckingham was offered six hundred a year for his house. I would not advise anybody I loved to furnish a house like Lord Villiers's; but to buy one so furnished at an estimate second-hand, though quite new, is what I should call prudence in a man of Lord Ossory's rank and fortune. In short, I could step to you in my slippers; don't wonder I am eager. Pray send our Lord to town the moment he returns, and me such an answer as I shall like.

1785. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 11, 1777.

I WRITE in a most anxious moment, and tremble lest you should know worse than we have heard yet. I had a letter from the Duchess[1] on Tuesday, that raised our hopes. Yesterday brought one from Dr. Jebb to my brother, that dashed them down again. Sir Edward, who is truly very sagacious in physical cases, does not despond; and I, always disposed to expect what I wish, and who do not believe that it is so easy to die as is imagined, do not quite despair—yet that word *quite* would scarce turn a scale against a feather. I dare not look farther, nor figure the distress of the Duchess, if the dreadful misfortune should happen. Lord Cholmondeley is gone to Trent, and will be of great use and comfort—but I will hope yet. Do not wonder, nor take it ill, that nobody thought of writing to you: think but of what the distress and confusion must be; and how little they could attend to anything but writing to England. I, here, only contemplating in melancholy tranquillity the misfortune hanging over my poor niece, should not write

LETTER 1785.—[1] Of Gloucester.

to many but you at such a moment. The Duke's family must be exhausted with fatigue and anxiety, and I fear barely able to go through their duty. You should pity them, not suspect them of neglect.

I can tell you nothing else that you will like much better. The conquest of America is put off to the millennium. It is hoped, and thence supposed, that General Howe is gone to take some place, or beat some army, that is more practicable than dislodging Washington. Burgoyne has sent over a manifesto, that, if he was to overrun ten provinces, would appear too pompous; and yet, let him achieve ever so little, it will be sure of not being depreciated; so great is the want of something to keep up the spirits of the people, who stare a little at being bullied on their own coasts, after being told that five thousand men would overrun all America. France sits by and laughs, receives our remonstrances, sends us an ambassadress, and winks on Dr. Franklin, that it is all the comfort she will give us.—I believe you will not wish me to expatiate more on *that* chapter.

Lord Orford seems to be sinking into a state of infancy. I am not sorry you did not name him to his mother—you could not make her feel, and then it is not worth while to make her blush. I am laying in to serve him, by trying to drive away his crew. Unless I can do that, which I doubt, I will not meddle with his affairs. I endeavour to provoke or to frighten them; but I conclude attorneys and rogues are vermin not easily rooted out of a rich soil.

Lady Mary Churchill's[2] eldest daughter is married to Lord Cadogan. She is very pretty, amiable, and eight-and-twenty; he, rich and fifty. It is a great match for her, and in my opinion preferable to one with most of our youths, who dissipate enormous fortunes in a couple of years. I have not time to say more now, nor any event to tell you.

[2] Mr. Walpole's sister. *Walpole.*

P.S. Sir W. Hamilton was set out before I received the letter you sent me for him. I will send it after him when I can learn whither, but he will not be at Naples for many months.

1786. To Lady Cecilia Johnston.

Aug. 19, 1777.

Our abdicated monarch, Lear[1],
And bonny Dame Cadwallader[2],
With a whole theatre in one[3] from France,
And Raftor[4], wont th' Eclipse in Hays to dance,
Next Saturn's day, if fair or foul,
On bacon, ham, and chicken-fowl,
Intend with Horace—no great bard,
Nor one of Epicurus' herd—
To dine. Oh, would divine Cecilia deign,
With her brave warrior[5] to augment the train,
From every castle famed in days of yore,
Of which, or poets or romancers tell,
For wit and cheerfulness, and humour—store,
My Strawberry, my Strawberry, shall bear away the bell.

1787. To Viscount Nuneham.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1777.

As I am sure the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester have no well-wishers more sincere than your Lordship and Lady Nuneham, I flatter myself I shall give both pleasure by taking the liberty of letting you know that all the letters of the 12th are in a new style, and speak of his Royal Highness as much mended. Those of the 8th were full of despair. He had set up an hour, and the Duchess had been

Letter 1786.—[1] Garrick, who retired from the stage in 1776.

[2] Mrs. Clive, who created that part in *The Author* by Foote, produced at Drury Lane in 1757.

[3] Le Texier.

[4] Mrs. Clive's brother. See letter to Viscount Nuneham of Dec. 6, 1775.

[5] Her husband, General Johnston.

out to take the air, after not quitting one floor for seven weeks, nor writing for three, so immediate had been her apprehensions. The physicians flattered her that the Duke would be able to begin his journey in a fortnight. I shall be overjoyed to hear he has, as constant change of air and motion will restore his strength faster than anything. They hope to be in England in October.

I dined to-day at Lady Cecilia's. She tells me the French Ambassador and Ambassadress are going to Nuneham. The poor Prince of Masserano, I doubt, is on the point of a longer journey. I will not, under pretence of a duty, be tiresome, though so great a pleasure to converse with you.

1788. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1777.

Not Apollo on his forked hill, nor *le Dieu Phœbus*, nor 'full-blown Bufo,' nor Lord Bute when he sat on the altar of the Treasury and inhaled clouds of Scotch incense—ay, and of English too—could be more proud than I am with having inspired your Ladyship with French verses: to be sure I should have returned them, if I was as thorough-paced a poetaster as Madame Pinto supposes. She came to see my house t'other day, and told me in Portug*hée*-French, that '*pou*têtre she detourned me from making des petits vers.' I hate to have a scrap of reputation, and had rather anybody thought I could not write my name; unless all Dame Pintos had the simplicity of Balzac's neighbour, who assured him he had a profound respect for him and *messieurs ses livres*. I wonder how a real genius supports the absurd compliments he must meet with: I know, when they tumble down to my sphere, they make me sweat.

The Duke of Gloucester is risen from the dead. You may judge, Madam, how far gone he was, when all the

letters were full of transports at his having sat up an hour! The Duchess tells me she has been out to take the air, after not stirring out of their apartment for seven weeks. In truth, I was almost as much frightened about *her*, for, after writing to some of us constantly twice a week since the commencement of the Duke's illness, three posts arrived without a line from her. I had pain enough to stifle my own apprehensions and hush those of her poor daughters. Her own letter to me in the midst of her joy is the most moving I ever read. If the physicians did not confirm the accounts of his Royal Highness's great amendment, I should doubt that a flash of hope through such a gloom had elated their spirits too much. Probably a kind message from the King by Colonel Jennings wrought the miracle; but I must not omit a charming trait of a little girl in the house where they lodged. The Duke longed for potatoes. None were to be found. A messenger was sent twenty miles. The poor little soul, hearing such a hubbub for potatoes, asked what sort of things they were. On their being described, she said not a word, but stole out to a convent where she had seen some, begged four, and brought them for the Duke, who ate them all eagerly, and desired more.

Infidels may think what they will, but I am convinced it was a cherub, and conclude it has never appeared since. The famous Council that sat at Trent would have given a thousand ducats for a glimpse of inspiration a quarter as big.

You ask what I meant by *the Dorset's self*, &c.—alas! very little; only that Ampthill would miss the fair Vernons, though Lady Holland and Lady Louisa were there. To be sure, I might have used those very words, as well as a line from Prior that did not express my meaning. The truth is, that as I generally write in a hurry, and say anything that comes into my head, it may well be that nonsense is the

first to present itself, and then it is sure to take its place forwards, as it would in a stage-coach. For the future, I beg your Ladyship will suppose that if I blotted my letters, they would be perfectly intelligible; but as I trust you have too much taste not to prefer natural nonsense once in ten days to the sublime galimatias which one is composing for eight months in winter quarters, I shall go on in my old way, and not endeavour to take you by surprise after prodigious preparation.—Pray observe the art of this paragraph: it implies the conquest of Ticonderoga[1]. If you had not been so dull about Dorset, I should not have explained it.

I firmly believe Mézerai[2] is the best history of France; not because I have read it, but because I have not, and it is reckoned so. I don't always find that books answer their characters: my knowledge of everything is picked up from memoirs, novels, &c. I never dealt in substantial works; and though few simple gentlemen have read more, my memory is a chaos of aughts and ends, and fit for nobody's use but my own. How should I, Madam, recommend a course of reading, who hold learning very cheap, and only read for amusement, and never perused six pages of Scotch metaphysics in all my days?

I don't wonder Lord Ossory preferred Thoresby to the three old dukeries. So did I, and did not admire it much neither. Worksop is an artificial ugly forest of evergreens; Clumber aspires to the same merit, but is yet in leading-strings. Welbeck is in the other extremity, a devastation. The house is the delight of *my* eyes, for it is an hospital of old portraits. Merry Sherwood is a *trist* region, and wants a race of outlaws to enliven it, and as Duchess Robin-Hood[3]

Letter 1788.—[1] It was taken by Burgoyne on July 6, 1777.
[2] François Eudes de Mézerai (1610–1683).
[3] The Duchess of Kingston.

has run her country, it has little chance of recovering its ancient glory.

I think I shall step to Goodwood on Wednesday for a couple of days, if Tuesday's letters continue favourable. I had given up all thoughts of that journey; but the Conways and Mrs. Damer are going thither on their way to Mount Edgcumbe, and have almost persuaded me—not to go to the Land's End—I have no such long holidays.

I heard to-day at Richmond that Julius Cæsar Burgonius's Commentaries are to be published in an extraordinary *Gazette* of three-and-twenty pages in folio, to-morrow—a counterpart to the *Iliad* in a nutshell! I hope we shall have a Louvre edition of King Buckingham's[4] Ordinances on Etiquette.

1789. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 31, 1777.

You are very kind, dear Sir, in giving me an account of your health and occupations, and inquiring after mine. I am very sorry you are not as free from gout, as I have been ever since February; but I trust it will only keep you from other complaints, and never prevent your amusing yourself, which you are one of those few happy beings that can always do: and your temper is so good, and your mind so naturally philosophic, composed, and contented, that you neither want the world, care about it, nor are affected by anything that happens in it. This is true wisdom, but wisdom which nothing can give but constitution. Detached amusements have always made a great part of my own delight, and have sown my life with most of its best moments. My intention was, that they should be the employments of my latter years, but fate seems to have chalked out a very different scene for me! The misfortune

[4] The Viceroy of Ireland.

of my nephew has involved me in business, and consequently care, and opens a scene of disputes, with which I shall not molest your tranquillity.

The dangerous situation in which his R. H. the Duke of Gloucester has been, and out of which I doubt he is scarce yet emerged, though better, has added more thorns to my uneasy mind. The Duchess's daughters are at Hampton Court, and partly under my care. In one word, my whole summer has been engrossed by duties, which have confined me at home, without indulging myself in a single pursuit to my taste. In short, as I have told you before, I often wish myself a monk at Cambridge. Writers on government condemn, very properly, a recluse life, as contrary to nature's intent, who loves procreation. But as nature seems not very desirous that we should propagate to threescore years and ten, I think convents very suitable retreats for those whom our *Alma Mater* does not emphatically call to her *Opus Magnum*. And though, to be sure, grey hairs are fittest to conduct state affairs, yet as the Rehoboams of the world (Louis XVI excepted) do not always trust the rudder of government to ancient hands, old gentlemen, methinks, are very ill-placed (when not at the council-board) anywhere but in a cloister. As I have no more vocation to the ministry than to carrying on my family, I sigh after a dormitory; and as in six weeks my clock will strike sixty, I wish I had nothing more to do with the world. I am not tired of living, but—but what signifies sketching visions? One must take one's lot as it comes: bitter and sweet are poured into every cup. To-morrow may be pleasanter than to-day. Nothing lasts of one colour. One must embrace the cloister, or take the chances of the world as they present themselves: and since uninterrupted happiness would but embitter the certainty that even that must end, rubs and crosses should be softened by the same consideration.

I am not so busied, but I shall be very glad of a sight of your MS., and will return it carefully. I will thank you, too, for the print of Mr. Jenyns, which I have not, nor have seen.

Adieu! dear Sir,
Yours most cordially,
H. W.

1790. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 1, 1777.

The Duke[1] is still struggling at Trent. Ten days ago the letters were suddenly and wonderfully mended, and we flattered ourselves the danger was quite over. The next post brought a little relapse, and great complaint of the heats. Two days ago we were a little comforted again. He had had two exceedingly good nights; and having gained so much time, and the physicians no longer speaking despondingly, though they will not from prudence give too great hopes, we trust we shall again see his Royal Highness in England. The Duchess's distress has equalled anything we could figure. For three weeks she did not write a syllable, nor even saw Mrs. Heywood[2]. She tells Lady Laura, her daughter, that she did nothing but pray and weep. She has still much to go through. It is well her constitution and courage are so firm. It will be the end of October at soonest before they can be at home. When the Duke is able to travel, I shall expect great things from motion and change of air. The King has sent him a kind message: it will do more than twenty physicians, and I believe produced the amendment, for his heart was broken.

General Burgoyne has taken Ticonderoga, and given

Letter 1790. — [1] The Duke of Gloucester.

[2] One of the Women of the Bedchamber who attended the Duchess of Gloucester abroad. *Walpole.*

a new complexion to the aspect of affairs, which was very wan indeed. General Howe is gone with a great force somewhither, and the moment is very critical. I don't pretend to form any judgement. Eleven months ago I thought America subdued; and a fortnight ago it was as little likely to be subdued as ever. We, the people, know little of the truth. One would think the more informed were not more settled in their opinions: for General Howe's retreat, after advancing towards Washington, produced despair; the taking of one post has given confidence. So much fluctuation begets a thousand reports. It is now said at once, that we are to hire fifteen thousand Russians for next campaign, and that we are treating for peace by the mediation of France. If you ask me what I believe—nothing but what is past—and perhaps have not heard a quarter of that. In one thing alone all that come from America agree, that the alienation from this country is incredible and universal; so that, instead of obtaining a revenue thence, the pretence of the war, the conquest would only entail boundless expense to preserve it. The New World will at last be revenged on the Old.

My poor nephew remains in the same undecided state; sometimes furious, sometimes sullen. I prophesy no more about him than about America; but, one way or other, he will be a source of vexation to me. But one speaks, or ought to speak, with more indifference about future events, when the clock is going to strike sixty. Visions, and hopes, and prospects, are pretty playthings for boys. It is folly to vex oneself for what cannot last very long. Indeed, what can, even when one is young? Corydon firmly believes he shall be wretched for ever, if he does not marry Phillis. That misery can but last till she has lost her bloom. His eternal woe would vanish, if her nose grew red. How often do our griefs become our comforts! I know

what I wish to-day; not at all what I shall wish to-morrow. Sixty says, You did not wish for *me*, yet you would like to keep me. Sixty is in the right; and I have not a word more to say.

1791. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 8, 1777, late.

I had written great part of a letter, Madam, by snatches, as my hopes or fears predominated, and with twenty nothings that came across me, as my spirits rose: now I shall send none of it, as the nonsense would be out of season, and the black scale preponderates. But I don't make myself understood. Well, Madam, we had no letters by Tuesday's mail, for the wind was contrary. Our uneasiness increased on Friday's mail too not arriving. On Sunday morning I received a letter from Paris, but could learn nothing from Trent. All yesterday my anxiety was extreme. It was not till late in the evening I learnt that the letters from Trent come by the Flemish post, and that two mails from Flanders were due; they are arrived and bring a very bad account indeed! Poor Lady Laura received a favourable letter from her mother of the 21st, but one of the 26th from the Duke's surgeon says his Royal Highness was relapsed, and so very bad, that it was thought he would be dead in four hours, though they should have some hopes if he did not go off by that time. I think he did weather that crisis, for no messenger is come; and had these letters arrived on Friday or Saturday, as they should have done, we should now be comforting ourselves on having gained three days without a messenger. I do not see why we may not equally presume, since the wind alone is the cause that we are alarmed so late. However, every relapse increases the peril, and the blow seems almost inevitable.

I have passed a most terrible evening amidst Lady Dysart and my poor girls: and I doubt it is only the beginning of sorrows—but you shall not be grieved with the details. I had, as I hope you think, answered your Ladyship's last in mine that I don't send, but at present it is impossible to attend to anything but the distress in question: excuse me till I have a calmer moment. I must muster all the reason I have, when so many will want my assistance.

1792. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Wednesday night, late, Sept. 10, 1777.

It is presuming a great deal upon your Ladyship's and Lord Ossory's friendship to trouble you with my distresses: at least I ought to communicate any gleam of joy too. By a mistake, the servants at Gloucester House sent us word yesterday morning that another mail was arrived, but had not brought one letter from Trent. This seemed decisive! every moment we expected the fatal courier! I ran down to the gate every time the bell rang, from not being able to wait for the blow. All yesterday and to-day passed in this dreadful suspense. No messenger arriving, my hopes could not help rekindling: at six I went to Hampton Court to communicate my ray of hope to my poor nieces; at seven, Mr. Hiel, the Duke's chief servant here, brought us a letter of the 29th that has put life into us; the pain in the leg was diminished, his Royal Highness had drunk a glass of wine and had spoken articulately. In short, he had survived for three days, after they had thought he would not last four hours; but I think I have better founded hope. My brother and I both flattered ourselves that the pain and swelling in the leg, which had been thought so alarming, were a new crisis of the distemper, and the flux not being returned, confirmed that opinion. I know some years ago

his terrible humour fell on his arm with a like swelling, and it was thought an amputation was necessary, but it soon went off. It will seem an age to Friday or Saturday, and the winds may be contrary again; but sufficient to the day is the evil thereof! Wait for the echo—my good old friend has proved faithful, when I thought even she could not articulate. There is a good deal more for her to contradict, for *my* echo, my oracle, never repeats what she hears, but the reverse. T'other echo lives at court, and always says *yes* with a broad Scotch accent. I must go to bed, for I am worn out. Good night, Madam.

1793. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 16, 1777.

I have received your volume safely, dear Sir, and hurry to thank you before I have read a page, that you may be in no pain about its arrival. I will return it with the greatest care as soon as I have finished it; and at the same time will send Mr. Essex the bills; as I beg you will let him know.

I have no less reason for writing immediately, to thank you for the great confidence you place in me. You talk of *nonsense*; alas! what are all our opinions else? If we search for truth before we fix our principles, what do we find but doubt? And which of us begins the search a *tabula rasa*? Nay, where can we hunt but in volumes of error or purposed delusion? Have not we, too, a bias in our own minds; our passions? They will turn the scale in favour of the doctrines most agreeable to them. Yet let us be a little vain: you and I differ radically in our principles; and yet in forty years they have never cast a gloom over our friendship. We could give the world a reason that it would not like. We have both been

sincere, have both been consistent, and neither adopted our principles, nor have varied them for our interest.

Your labour, as well as I am acquainted with it, astonishes me. It shows what can be achieved by a man that does not lose a moment: and, which is still better, how happy the man is who can always employ himself. I do not believe that the proud prelate, who would not make you a little happier, is half so much to be envied.

Thank you for the print of Soame Jennyns. It is a proof of Sir Joshua's art, who could give a strong resemblance of so uncouth a countenance, without leaving it disagreeable.

The Duke of Gloucester is miraculously revived. For two whole days I doubted whether he was not dead. I hope fatalists and omen-mongers will be confuted; and that, as his grandfather broke the charm of the *second* of the name being an unfortunate prince, the Duke will baffle that which has made the title of Gloucester unpropitious. Adieu! dear Sir,

Yours most gratefully,

H. Walpole.

1794. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Tuesday evening, Sept. 16, 1777.

I have got a delightful plaything, if I had time for play. It is a new sort of camera-obscura[1] for drawing the portraits of persons, or prospects, or insides of rooms, and does not depend on the sun or anything. The misfortune is, that there is a vast deal of machinery and putting together, and I am the worst person living for managing it. You know I am impenetrably dull in everything that requires a grain of common sense. The inventor is to come to me on

Letter 1794.—[1] The machine called a delineator. *Walpole.*

Friday, and try if he can make me remember my right hand from my left. I could as soon have invented my machine as manage it; yet it has cost me ten guineas, and may cost me as much more as I please for improving it. You will conclude it was the dearness tempted me. I believe I must keep an astronomer, like Mr. Beauclerk, to help me to play with my rattle. The inventor, who seems very modest and simple, but I conclude an able flatterer, was in love with my house, and vowed nothing ever suited his camera so well. To be sure, the painted windows and the prospects, and the Gothic chimneys, &c., &c., were the delights of one's eyes, when no bigger than a silver penny. *You* would know how to manage it, as if you had never done anything else. Had not you better come and see it? You will learn how to conduct it, with the pleasure of correcting my awkwardness and *unlearnability*. Sir Joshua Reynolds and West have each got one; and the Duke of Northumberland is so charmed with the invention, that I dare say he can talk upon and explain it till I should understand ten times less of the matter than I do. Remember, neither Lady Ailesbury, nor you, nor Mrs. Damer, have seen my new divine closet, nor the billiard-sticks with which the Countess of Pembroke and Arcadia used to play with her brother Sir Philip; nor the portrait of *la belle* Jennings[2] in the state bedchamber. I go to town this day se'nnight for a day or two; and as, *to be sure*, Mount Edgecumbe has put you out of humour with Park Place, you may deign to leave it for a moment. I never did see Cotehel[3], and am sorry. Is not the old wardrobe there still? There was one from the time of

[2] Frances (d. 1731), daughter of Richard Jennings, of Sandridge, Hertfordshire; m. (1) George, Count Hamilton; (2) Richard Talbot, Earl (afterwards Duke) of Tyrconnell. She was the sister of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.

[3] The old residence of the family of Edgcumbe, twelve miles distant from Mount Edgcumbe. *Walpole.*

Cain; but Adam's breeches and Eve's under-petticoat were eaten by a goat in the ark. Good night!

1795. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 18, 1777.

I am a little calm at present, and can tell what I say; which would not have been the case last week. The changes in the Duke of Gloucester's condition have been so frequent and so unexpected, that I have been buffeted with every opposite agitation. On Saturday was sevennight we heard his Royal Highness was in a very fair way. On the next Monday we were advertised that he was not likely to last four hours. The next day the post was said to be arrived, and to have brought no letters from Trent. Fatal as this seemed, the arrival of no messenger left a gleam of hope; and next evening a favourable letter proved the mistake of the post having arrived sooner. Two more posts have brought more rapid accounts of amendment than one can scarce credit, if two circumstances did not solve the vast improbability. The humour had fallen on the lower parts, but with such violence as to bring on all the ordinary prognostics of immediate death; and the Duke swelled from his groin to his foot. This vent cleared the bowels, and, as the stamina are still more vigorous than the royal humour, they seem to have conquered. For the swiftness of the recovery, it is owing to a very different cause; to the removal of a malady that had co-operated with the disorder in the blood to bring on so violent and lasting an attack. In short, the King has sent his Royal Highness a most kind and brotherly letter, and the physicians are not to blame for not having prescribed a medicine that was not in their dispensary.

You may judge to what a skeleton such a conflict of body

and mind, in bed for thirteen weeks, and in so sultry a climate, must have reduced the Duke. They could hear the bones, they say, rattle in his skin. They speak of the Duchess's distraction, and the change in her person and beauty, with as much energy. Well! may we but see them here again! I will add no more; I have curbed myself to say so little. But what a week, and what transitions! It would make a tragedy to paint, as I did to myself, the Duchess travelling with the body, which the Duke had exacted of her, and with two infants, one just old enough to lisp daggers, and arriving in a succession of inns to be stared at, when she would wish herself in her grave; and returning to her own country to encounter mortification, triumph in her fall, and total uncertainty of her own fate, and of that of her children! It had been Agrippina again at Brundusium. No king ever had an opportunity of dispelling more woe, and his Majesty must taste the satisfaction he has given. It is the reverse of the tinsel, glory.

I know nothing else, and you cannot wonder that I have had room for nothing else. For above three weeks we have been totally in the dark about America. To tell you anything else would be repeating conjectures, which, though they fill up every cranny of the interstices of events, are most unsubstantial mortar, and rarely harden into part of the building.

My nephew remains quiet, but gives no prospect of amendment. What can one say of his mother?—no more than she says of him.

You are too reasonable about your own lameness to want any exhortation to patience. I am very weak on my feet too; but always say, when asked, I am well enough. The absence of pain is the pleasures of age. I wish you a great-nephew, because one ought to cultivate visions: it is true, disappointment is not quite so airy, nor vanishes like the

fumes that conjured it up. Pray don't imagine I am a philosopher but when I am pretty much at ease. Last week would give me the lie soundly, if I affected airs of stoicism. I pretend to nothing but to having chalked out for myself and pursued a plan of tranquillity; not because I had no passions, but because I knew the big ones, ambition and the chase of fortune, would produce more tempest in my passions than I could bear. The vexations my family have occasioned me were none of my seeking. I am neither so insensible as not to feel them, or not to try to remedy them. A little common sense is all the philosophy I possess; and, when the business of others does not torment me, nobody is more contented or can find more amusement than I. This place, my books and playthings, are empire enough for me; but, for amusing myself, I never was so totally debarred of that talent as this summer. I sigh to be my own master again; that is, idle. Adieu!

19th.

P.S. It is said a victualling-ship has brought an account of the Howes having attempted to cross the Delaware, in order to attack Philadelphia, and of Washington having marched and prevented them[1]; and that on this disappointment they were sailed to Boston. On the other hand, the provincials are said to have abandoned Fort Edward[2]. Few days will ascertain or contradict these events, and the papers will let you know.

A strange accident has happened. Lord Harcourt was missing the other day at dinner-time at his own seat[3], and at last was found suffocated in a well with his head downwards, and his dog upon him. It is concluded that the dog

LETTER 1795. — [1] Apparently a false report.

[2] On the Hudson, abandoned by the Americans on the approach of Burgoyne.

[3] Nuneham Harcourt, near Oxford.

had fallen in, and that the Earl, in trying to extricate him, had lost his poise and tumbled in too. It is an odd exit for the Governor of a King, Ambassador, and Viceroy. Another Ambassador has had a sad fall too: Count Virry[4] is arrested at Susa, and ordered to present himself twice a day to the Governor. Madame[5] has leave to go where she pleases. Whither can she go? or how not stay with her husband? The Prince of Masserano[6] is set out, so ill, that I question if he will reach Calais.

1796. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 18, 1777.

You will not suspect my silence of idleness, I am but too apt to overwrite to any one, I have so perfect a friendship for. I only suppress my communicative disposition when I have nothing to say but what would grieve those that feel for me. The dangerous illness of the Duke of Gloucester, and the dreadful situation of my niece (and have not I another nephew besides!) have kept me in such agitation between hopes and despair, that I have had no peace or leisure. The present moment is very favourable; the Prince has mended amazingly; he has had a most gracious letter from the King, and so I hope I shall be at liberty to be a mortal again, and not anxious about princes.

This is not my immediate motive for writing, but to tell

[4] Count Virry was son of one of the same title, who had been the Sardinian Minister in England, and was himself Ambassador in France. While in England he married Miss Speed, niece of Lady Cobham. *Walpole.*

[5] The Countess Virry, who was supposed to be the cause of her husband's disgrace, as very intriguing, and to have invited him to keep up a secret correspondence at Turin for making himself Prime Minister, which was discovered. Lord Shelburne, who was her friend, prevailed on the King to obtain their pardon of the King of Sardinia in 1783; about which time she died suddenly. She was one of the heroines of Mr. Gray's *Long Story*, and had a great deal of wit. *Walpole.*

[6] The Spanish Ambassador in England; he died on Nov. 15, 1777.

you an amazing piece of news that I have this moment received from town. The dinner-bell had rung—where? at Nuneham. The Earl did not appear. After much search, he was found standing on his head in a well, a dear little favourite dog upon his legs, his stick and one of his gloves lying near. My letter does not say whether he had dropped the other. In short, I know no more.

I will behave as well as I can on all national misfortunes, and so I proceed to tell you, with a proper degree of affliction, that a victualler has come in who reports that the loquacious Howes have miscarried in their attempt on Philadelphia, and are believed to be gone to Boston; that the provincials have abandoned Fort Edward, it is said; and that, I suppose, the silent, modest, humble General Burgoyne has not yet finished his concise description of the victorious manner in which he took possession of it, for said description is not yet arrived. *My* dinner-bell rings, and lest my servants should suspect an accident, I must finish. Did you receive the *Gazettes Littéraires* which I left where you ordered a month ago?

1797. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1777.

The Duchess's story is so interesting, Madam, that the sequel is as necessary as to a romance; but though I began it with warmth, the continuation will be told as coldly, as second parts by another hand. I am so apt to be hurried away by my first impressions, which is the mark of folly and a weak head, that I am determined never to know my own mind, till I have changed it. This may sound nonsense, but it contains a vast deal of meaning; the present solution of which is, that I shall simply relate facts, and leave their consequences to time.

The Duke's amendment has been most rapid—so rapid as to show that the humour in his blood was not the sole cause of his danger. As he began to grow better, he received a most gracious letter from the King, declaring his affection never had altered, never should. No wonder this revived his Royal Highness's spirits, and they advanced his recovery. The last letter from the surgeon his page says he by no means thinks the Duke yet out of danger. Others flattered themselves he would be able to begin his journey three days ago. I hope they will be in no hurry, nor move him till there is no risk of a relapse. We expect more letters to-day. It is a little your Ladyship's own fault, if I have talked too often on this subject.

The Howes have committed such another miscarriage, that for want of understanding it, great politicians conclude it is a *chef-d'œuvre* of finesse. The troops landed at Wilmington, on the high road to Philadelphia, and then re-embarked; and are believed to be sailed to Boston. One thing at least they forgot, which is, that some achievement is necessary before the meeting of Parliament, and the time presses, for there is no living any longer upon Ticonderoga and declamations, though as the provincials have abandoned Fort Edward, no doubt there is another cargo of bombast upon the road. No honour is given to Washington from this second retreat, because it is not certain he had any share in it, and because if he had, he probably would not accept a red riband. The fact is certain, though and for, it comes from Scotland.

What a strange exit Lord Harcourt's! I am sorry for anybody's misfortune, though I cannot dislike to see Lord Nuneham earl: it is an addition to my concern for the poor father, as in all probability he perished by trying to save his dog. You know how that must touch *me*.

There has been a more dreadful accident to an inhabitant

of Twickenham, and yet I am not very perfect in it. A son[1] of Lord Hawke, who lodged here, returning from town at midnight on horseback, met a post-chaise that ran against him. The driver, trying to check his horses, elevated the pole, and it rushed full into Mr. Hawke's body, who died in an hour in great agonies. The mystery is, that he lived here with a woman to whom he is supposed to be privately married, and therefore went here by the name of Captain Smith. Not being known, his name (which name I don't know) was found in his hat, and they fetched the poor woman to him.

Have not I sent you here great food for an evening at a shooting-party, Madam? My gazettes will take leave to repose till they have another crop: for if Lord Suffolk and Lord Holdernesse now get the long-contested Garters, it will not be worth putting you to the expense of three-pence.

1798. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 21, 1777.

This is but a codicil to my last, but I forgot to mention in it a new discovery that charms me more than Harlequin did at ten years old, and will bring all paradise before your eyes more perfectly than you can paint it to the good women of your parish. It will be the delight of your solitude, and will rival your own celestinette. It is such a perfecting of the camera-obscura, that it no longer depends on the sun, and serves for taking portraits with a force and exactness incredible; and serves almost as well by candlelight as by day. It is called *the delineator*, and is invented within these eighteen months by a Mr. Storer, a Norfolk man, one of the modestest and humblest of beings. Sir Joshua Reynolds and West are gone mad with it, and it will be their own

Letter 1797.—[1] Hon. Chaloner Hawke, third son of Lord Hawke.

faults if they do not excel Rubens in light and shade, and all the Flemish masters in truth. It improves the beauty of trees,—I don't know what it does not do—everything for me, for I can have every inside of every room here drawn minutely in the size of this page. Mr. Storer fell as much in love with Strawberry Hill as I did with his instrument. The perspectives of the house, which I studied so much, are miraculous in this camera. The gallery, cabinet, round drawing-room, and great bedchamber, make such pictures as you never saw. The painted glass and trees that shade it are Arabian tales. This instrument will enable engravers to copy pictures with the utmost precision: and with it you may take a vase or the pattern of a china jar in a moment; architecture and trees are its greatest beauty; but I think it will perform more wonders than electricity, and yet it is so simple as to be contained in a trunk, that you may carry in your lap in your chaise, for there is such contrivance in that trunk that the filbert in the fairy tales which held such treasures was a fool to it. In short, it is terrible to be threescore when it is just invented; I could play with it for forty years; when will you come up and see it? I am sure you will not go back without one.

I fear I was a little indelicate about Lord Harcourt's death, but I am so much more glad, when I am glad, than I can be sorry, when I am not, that I forgot the horror of the father's exit in my satisfaction at the son's succession; like the two universities, my congratulations to the reigning sovereign are much more hearty than my *luctus* for the departed one. I leave it to Lord Holdernesse and Lord Suffolk to pretend they are sorry that they have a competitor less for the Garter.

Are not you content with Lord Abingdon's[1] pamphlet?

LETTER 1798.—[1] Willoughby Bertie (1740–1799), fourth Earl of Abingdon. His pamphlet was called *Thoughts on Mr. Burke's Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol on the Affairs of America.*

are you not more? are you not glad he has so well puffed away Burke's sophistries? Who would have thought of this little David? I am sure I should not have been surprised if I had seen him knocking down a blackbird with a sling; my Lord's Grace of York will not be pleased.

As I am got far enough from the paragraph about Lord Harcourt, may I ask if you do not feel a little satisfaction in the idea of our meeting at Nuneham? I am sorry I am threescore upon that account too; at that age one has not a vast many reasons for wishing to live long, but as loss of friends is the great bitter of old age, it is equally reasonable to like to enjoy their happiness. I am sure Lord Nuneham will have been exceedingly shocked; he is all good nature, and was an excellent son, and deserved a fonder father. I hear Mrs. Montagu made a high-flown panegyric two days ago on the late Earl. The poor man had not an idea; but Bishop Hurd dined at the same place, and I suppose she thought it necessary for a muse to sing the praises of all royal governors and preceptors. It was at Cambridge's; I was asked to dine there, but excused myself, for I have no pleasure in laughing at people, and am only weary when they are acting affected parts.

P.S. I recollect that they were the *Mémoires de Bachaumont* and not the *Gazettes Littéraires* that I sent you last: did you receive them?

1799. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 22, 1777.

I return your MS., dear Sir, with a thousand thanks, and shall be impatient to hear that you receive it safe. It has

amused me much, and I admire Mr. Baker[1] for having been able to show so much sense on so dry a subject. I wish, as you say you have materials for it, that you would write his life. He deserved it much more than most of those he has recorded. His book on the Deficiencies of Learning is most excellent, and far too little known. I admire his moderation, too; which was extraordinary in a man that had suffered so much for his principles. Yet they warped even him, for he rejects Bishop Burnet's character of Bishop Gunning[2] in p. 200, and yet in the very next page, gives the same character of him. Burnet's words are, 'he had a great confusion of things in his head, but could bring nothing into method': pray compare this with p. 201. I see nothing in which they differ, except that Burnet does not talk so much of his comeliness as Mr. Baker.

I shall not commend *your* moderation, when you excuse such a man as Bishop Watson[3]. Nor ought you to be angry with Burnet, but with the witnesses on whose evidence Watson was convicted. To tell you the truth, I am glad when such faults are found with Burnet, for it shows his enemies are not angry at his telling falsehoods, but the truth. Must not an historian say a bishop was convicted of simony, if he was? I will tell you what I have heard was said on the appearance of Burnet's *History*, by one whose testimony you yourself will not dispute —at least you would not in anything else. That confessor said, 'Damn him, he has told a great deal of truth, but where the devil did he learn it?' This was Saint Atterbury's testimony.

LETTER 1799. — [1] Rev. Thomas Baker (1656-1740), antiquary. His Life was written by Horace Walpole at Cole's request. See *Works* of Lord Orford, vol. ii. p. 341.

[2] Peter Gunning, D.D. (1614-1684), Bishop of Chichester, 1669-75; of Ely, 1675-84.

[3] Thomas Watson, D.D. (1637-1717), Bishop of St. Davids, 1687-99. In the latter year he was found guilty of simony and deprived of his see.

I shall take the liberty of reproving you, too, dear Sir, for defending that abominable murderess Queen Christina —and how can you doubt her conversation with Burnet? You must know there are a thousand evidences of her laughing at the religion she embraced. If you approve her, I will allow you to condemn Lord Russel and Algernon Sidney. Well, as we shall never have the same heroes, we will not dispute about them—nor shall I find fault, when you have given me so much entertainment: it would be very ungrateful, and I have a thousand obligations to you, and want to have more. I want to see more of your MSS. They are full of curiosities, and I love some of your heroes, too. I honour Bishop Fisher, and love Mr. Baker.

I have found very few errata indeed, and have corrected a few with a pencil: all are very trifling. In p. 2, last line but one, *Originial* is written for *Original*; and in p. 6, line 7, of the copy of verses, *lyest* for *lyes*; in p. 10, line 17, *authentic* probably for *unauthentic*.

In p. 200 you are a little mistaken. The late King of France was not silent from rule, but shyness: he could scarce ever be persuaded to speak to entire strangers.

If I might choose, I should like to see your account of the persons educated at King's—but as you may have objections, I insist, if you have, that you make me no word of answer. It is, perhaps, impertinent to ask it; and silence will lay neither of us under any difficulty. I have no right to make such a request; nor do now, but on the foot of its proving totally indifferent to you. You will make me blame myself, if it should a moment distress you, and I am sure you are too good-natured to put me out of humour with myself; which your making no answer would not do.

I enclose my bills for Mr. Essex, and will trouble you to send them to him.

I again thank you, and trust you will be as friendlily free with me, as I have been with you. You know I am a brother monk in everything but in religious and political opinions. I only laugh at the Thirty-nine Articles, but abhor Calvin as much as I do the Queen of Sweden: for he was as thorough an assassin.

Yours ever,
H. W.

P.S. As I have a great mind, and, indeed, ought, when I require it, to show moderation, and when I have not, ought to confess it: which I do: for I own I am not moderate on certain points; if you are busy yourself and will send me the materials, I will draw up the life of Mr. Baker; and if you are not content with it, you shall burn it in Smithfield. In good truth, I revere conscientious martyrs of all sects, communions, and parties. I heartily pity them, if they are weak men. When they are as sensible as Mr. Baker, I doubt my own understanding more than his. I know I have not his virtues; but should delight in doing justice to them; and, perhaps, from a man of a different party, the testimony would be the more to his honour. I do not call myself of different principles; because a man that thinks himself bound by his oath can be a man of no principle if he violates it. I do not mean to deny but many men might think K. James's breach of his oath a dispensation from theirs; but, if they did not think so, or did not think their duty to their country obliged them to renounce their King, I should never defend those who took the new oaths from interest.

1800. To Earl Harcourt.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 28, 1777.

I flatter myself my zeal will not appear too prompt in assuring your Lordship and Lady Harcourt of the part I take in your late terrible shock[1]. I wished to express it the first moment, but trusted you both know me too well to doubt of what I felt for you. I still write in pain lest I should be importunate, and beg you will not trouble yourself to answer me, as all I mean is to show that I never can be insensible to anything that affects you.

It may be some satisfaction to your Lordship to know that every letter brings better accounts of the Duke of Gloucester. I will answer for the Duchess, that she is too sensible of your Lordship's friendship not to share with me in all I have felt for you. I have the honour to be, with the greatest regard, &c.

1801. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 29, 1777.

I promised to have nothing to say for some time, Madam, and have had nothing but the old resource of the weather. I must make *amende honorable* to our summers, for though they arrive *à la maccaroni* three months too late, they come in Eastern pomp and with southern gales, as if they were part of the riches we gather in India. I did not use to love September, with its betweenity of parched days and cold long evenings, but this has been all lustre and verdancy: I am sorry it is at its end.

The Howes are gone the Lord knows whither, and have carried the American war with them, so there is

Letter 1800.—[1] The sudden death of Lord Harcourt's father.

nothing to say on that head, which is a great drawback on correspondence in the *shooting* season. General Burgoyne has had but bad sport in the woods.

The Bishop of Exeter, my niece, and Miss Keppel have been with me for two or three days, and the Dysarts and Waldegraves have come to us all day, so I have been an old patriarch, as far as an uncle can be so. The weather and my young nieces made the gallery very splendid, for Miss Keppel[1] is a glorious creature, and handsomer than any of her cousins.

I beg to know by the first courier whether Charles Fox is author of a copy of verses to Poverty[2], attributed to him in the *Annual Register*. I never heard of them before.

I was in town on Tuesday, and bought a new pamphlet that pleases me exceedingly. It is called *An Unconnected Whig's Address to the Public*. It comprehends in a very short way the chief points in the American contest. The author seems a good deal more attached to the Marquis[3] than he pretends to be, but there is a great deal of truth, and not the less for the contempt it expresses of that mulish cart-horse George Grenville.

This letter is all rags; but I cannot help it. I have really nothing to say, and, as every post confirms the Duke's amendment, my mind is easy; and when nothing is poured into it, nothing will come out of it. I own there are a great many wheels within, but they stand still, like the waterworks at Versailles, if not set in motion on some particular occasion.

I know nothing of poor Mrs. Hawke[4], as I have seen none of our village this week. At first they said she was gone

LETTER 1801.—[1] Anna Maria, eldest daughter of Dr. Frederick Keppel, Bishop of Exeter, and great-niece of Horace Walpole; m. (1790) Hon. William Stapleton, son of Sir Thomas Stapleton, fifth Baronet, and brother of sixteenth Baron Despencer.

[2] See *Ann. Reg.* 1776, p. 224.

[3] Probably the Marquis of Rockingham.

[4] See letter to Lady Ossory of Sept. 20, 1777.

mad, and then I heard Lord Hawke had sent for her. I don't know if either is true.

The new Duke of Norfolk's son is to be called Earl of Surrey, not of Arundel. This is to my mind, though it will be a paltry Earl of Surrey. The old Duke[5] has left everything with the title (except 3,000*l.* a year to Harry Howard[6], who probably will be Duke, and 2,000*l.* a year to Lord Stourton's[7] son, a great nephew; and they were not Howard estates), and has tied up his drunken heir so that he cannot remove a picture. He has given him, too, a family estate in Norfolk, repurchased from Lord Petre. To Lady Smith[8], who lived with him twenty years, he gives a trumpery annuity of fourscore pounds a year, as if she were his old coachman! I remember the present Lord Pomfret, when his mother thought she had paid all his debts and discovered still more, wrote to her that he could compare himself only to *Cerberus*, who, when one head was cut off, another sprung up in its room. This was a very new piece of mythology. The house of Howard is not a bit like the old story of Cerberus, *alias* the Hydra, for so many of their heads were cut off formerly that it looks as if they never would have a head worth wearing on their shoulders again.

1802. To Robert Jephson.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 1, 1777.

To confer favours, Sir, is certainly not giving trouble: and had I the most constant occupation, I should contrive to find moments for reading your works. I have passed

[5] Edward Howard, eighth Duke of Norfolk; d. Sept. 20, 1777.

[6] Henry Howard (d. 1842), of Corby Castle, Cumberland.

[7] William Stourton (1704–1781), sixteenth Baron Stourton. His only son, Hon. Charles Philip Stourton, succeeded him as seventeenth Baron.

[8] Hon. Mary Clifford (d. 1797), daughter of fourth Baron Clifford, of Chudleigh, and wife of Sir Edward Smythe, fourth Baronet, of Acton Burnell, Shropshire. Lady Smythe was a niece of the Duke's wife.

a most melancholy summer, from different distresses in my family; and though my nephew's situation and other avocations prevent my having but very little time for literary amusements, I did not mean to debar myself of the pleasure of hearing from my friends. Unfortunately, at present, it is impossible for me to profit of your kindness; not from my own business, but from the absence of Mr. Garrick. He is gone into Staffordshire to marry a nephew, and thence will pass into Wales to superintend a play that is to be acted at Sir Watkin Williams's. I am even afraid I shall not be the first apprised of his return, as I possibly may remove to town in expectation of the Duchess of Gloucester, before he is at home again. I shall not neglect my own satisfaction; but mention this circumstance, that you may not suspect me of inattention, if I should not get sight of *your* tragedy so soon as I wish.

I am, Sir, with great regard.

1803. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 2, 1777.

I am a little uneasy, dear Sir, at not hearing that you have received your precious volume. I sent it, as you ordered, to the Queen's Head in Gray's Inn Lane yesterday was sevennight, and my own servant carried it, and they assured him you would receive it the next day. With it I troubled you with a little parcel for Mr. Essex. As he promised me to come hither the beginning of this month, I am in hopes he is coming, and will bring me word of your having received your book. I should be out of my wits if you had not.

Yours ever,

H. W.

Letter 1803.—Not in C.; printed in the 4to (1818) ed. of the Letters to Cole; now printed from original in British Museum.

1804. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Oct. 5, 1777.

You are exceedingly good, and I shall assuredly accept your proposal in the fullest sense, and to ensure Mrs. Damer, beg I may expect you on Saturday next the 11th. If Lord and Lady William Campbell will do me the honour of accompanying you, I shall be most happy to see them, and expect Miss Caroline[1]. Let me know about them, that the state bedchamber may be aired.

My difficulties about removing from home arise from the consciousness of my own weakness. I make it a rule, as much as I can, to conform wherever I go. Though I am threescore to-day, I should not think that an age for giving everything up; but it is, for whatever one has not strength to perform. You, though not a vast deal younger, are as healthy and strong, thank God! as ever you was: and you cannot have ideas of the mortification of being stared at by strangers and servants, when one hobbles, or cannot do as others do. I delight in being with you, and the Richmonds, and those I love and know; but the crowds of young people, and Chichester folks, and officers, and strange servants, make me afraid of Goodwood, I own. My spirits are never low; but they seldom will last out the whole day; and though I dare to say I appear to many capricious, and different from the rest of the world, there is more reason in my behaviour than there seems. You know in London I seldom stir out in a morning, and always late; and it is because I want a great deal of rest. Exercise never did agree with me: and it is hard if I do not know myself by this time; and what has done so well with me will probably suit me best

Letter 1804. — [1] Miss Caroline Campbell, eldest daughter of Lord William Campbell. *Walpole.*

for the rest of my life. It would be ridiculous to talk so much of myself, and to enter into such trifling details, but *you* are the person in the world that I wish to convince that I do not act merely from humour or ill humour; though I confess at the same time that I want your *bonhomie,* and have a disposition not to care at all for people that I do not absolutely like. I could say a great deal more on this head, but it is not proper; though, when one has pretty much done with the world, I think with Lady Blandford, that one may indulge oneself in one's own whims and partialities in one's own house. I do not mean, still less to profess, retirement, because it is less ridiculous to go on with the world to the last, than to return to it; but in a quiet way it has long been my purpose to drop a great deal of it. Of all things I am farthest from not intending to come often to Park Place, whenever you have little company; and I had rather be with you in November than in July, because I am so totally unable to walk farther than a snail. I will never say any more on these subjects, because there may be as much affectation in being over-old, as folly in being over-young. My idea of age is, that one has nothing really to do but what one ought, and what is reasonable. All affectations are pretensions; and pretending to be anything one is not, cannot deceive when one is known, as everybody must be that has lived long. I do not mean that old folks may not have pleasures if they can; but then I think those pleasures are confined to being comfortable, and to enjoying the few friends one has not outlived. I am so fair as to own, that one's duties are not pleasures. I have given up a great deal of my time to nephews and nieces, even to some I can have little affection for. I do love my nieces, nay like them; but people above forty years younger are certainly not the society I should seek. They can only think and talk of what is, or is to come; I certainly am more disposed

to think and talk of what is past: and the obligation of passing the end of a long life in sets of totally new company is more irksome to me than passing a great deal of my time, as I do, quite alone. Family love and pride make me interest myself about the young people of my own family—for the whole rest of the young world, they are as indifferent to me as puppets or black children. This is my creed, and a key to my whole conduct, and the more likely to remain my creed, as I think it is *raisonné*. If I could paint my opinions instead of writing them—and I don't know whether it would not make a new sort of alphabet—I should use different colours for different affections at different ages. When I speak of love, affection, friendship, taste, liking, I should draw them rose colour, carmine, blue, green, yellow, for my cotemporaries: for new comers, the first would be of no colour; the others, purple, brown, crimson, and changeable. Remember, one tells one's creed only to one's confessor, that is, *sub sigillo*. I write to you as I think; to others as I must. Adieu!

1805. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 5, 1777.

There is nothing so unfortunate as to be a philosopher and a wise man, and a reasoner, and to know what can and cannot be done. If invention had not preceded demonstration, we should by this time have understood the whole system of the universe, but have thought it impossible to alter or improve anything in our world. This is my opinion, and you may confute it by argument if you please. I who have a sovereign contempt for Euclid, and Newton, and Locke, and admire nothing but original genius, and hold that everything will be found out at last, as flying, living for ever, &c., trust to none of my senses, having seen Jonas

perform what I did not believe, when I saw, and heard Le Texier be a dozen persons at once. In short, it is a joke to say anything is impossible. The delineator does perform wonders; and though from my own immachinality I can do little or nothing with it, which has abated something of my enthusiasm, you, who will be able to work wonders with it, are to blame to contest its possibilities. As I tell you I don't know how to manage it, you may swear I cannot describe or give directions for conducting it. It cost me ten guineas, and I believe they are thrown away, for in a twelvemonth it will certainly be brought to greater perfection. In one point you are very right, one must be as motionless as Lord Abercorn, or the least vibration of the features spoils the portrait. In good truth, though I stared like the mob at the witchery of this new instrument, yet if it had not been so mysteriously involved in a box, I am not sure it would have surprised me more than any reflection painted on a diminishing mirror. The child has had his plaything broken to see what it was made of, and is weary of it; however I think it will answer admirably for taking the insides of buildings, and near prospects, and statues, and vases, and be of great help to engravers, and it does serve without the sun.

Lord Harcourt has given away at least fifty thousand pounds to his daughter and younger son. I hold it very right not to heap all on heirs apparent; and yet loving the new Earl, and not caring a straw for the brother and sister, my concern for the father is not at all augmented. I had too the same reason that you hint at for being glad our friend is in possession. He had told me his intentions for you, but not knowing whether he had mentioned them to you, I was trusty you see, and did not divulge them even to you,—but it was a charming thought, and I hope the well will not be stopped up.

You ask the history of Burgoyne the Pompous. He is a natural son[1] of Lord Bingley, who put him into the entail of the estate, but when young Lane came of age the entail was cut off. He ran away with the old Lord Derby's daughter[2], and has been a fortunate gamester. Junius was thought unjust, as he was never supposed to do more than play very well. I have heard him speak in Parliament, just as he writes; for all his speeches were written and laboured, and yet neither in them nor in his conversation did he ever impress me with an idea of his having parts. He is however a very useful commander, for he feeds the *Gazette* and the public, while the Howes and the war are so dumb.

I have read the *Unconnected Whig*, and recommend him to you; he does not waste words like the unmerciful hero of the last paragraph. It is a short, clear, strong picture of our present situation and its causes. I see no fault in it, but its favour for the Rockinghams, the most timid set of time-serving triflers that ever existed; why should not he dine with his Grace[3]? Do not all Lord Rockingham's politics begin and end with dinners? Is not decency their whole wisdom? when they shunned Wilkes, could they avoid the Archbishop? I would lay a wager that if a parcel of schoolboys were to play at politicians, the children that should take the part of the opposition would discover more spirit and sense. The cruellest thing that has been said of the Americans by the court, is, that they were encouraged by the opposition. You might as soon light a fire with a wet dish-clout. Adieu.

LETTER 1805.—[1] This does not seem to have been the case. The *Dictionary of National Biography* describes him as the 'only son of Captain John Burgoyne, a man of fashion, who died in the rules of the King's Bench, and grandson of Sir John Burgoyne, Baronet, of Sutton Park, Bedfordshire.'

[2] Lady Charlotte Burgoyne was the sixth daughter of eleventh Earl of Derby; she died in 1776.

[3] The Archbishop of York.

1806. To Earl Harcourt.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 8, 1777.

I will never believe in impulses more; no, for I tore open the sacred box with as much impatience and as little reverence as Lady Barrymore could have done if she expected a new coiffeur from Paris. No holy *frisson*, no involuntary tear warned me that there was but a piece of paper between my sacrilegious fingers and the most precious relics[1] in the world. Alas! Why am not I a Gregory or a Boniface, and possess treasures enough to found a Casa Santa over the invaluable offering your Lordship has sent me. You enriched my museum before; you have now enriched me, for who is not rich, who possesses what the world cannot buy? You have done more, my Lord; you have given me a talisman that will for ever keep off Macpherson and evil spirits from entering my dwelling; you have shown generosity, too, in the highest sense, for you have given me what I know you value so much. I have seriously kissed each spur devoutly, and think them more lovely than Cellini's bell. You could have bestowed your bounty on no man living who could worship it more, nor is there any man living whom I should not envy the possession except General Washington. If he *gains his spurs* I think I could cede them. Thanks are poor, words could ill express my gratitude. The muse of the *Dispensary* would alone be capable of doing justice to your Lordship, as she did to the hero who wore these inestimable trophies.

One grief mixes with my transports. How could Ireland suffer the removal of her Palladium? does she not expect a host of toads, locusts, Scots, and every venomous insect

Letter 1806.—[1] The spurs worn by William III at the battle of the Boyne; presented to the first Earl Harcourt when Viceroy of Ireland. They were now given to Horace Walpole by his son, the second Earl.

in swarms on her coast? or is it not a mark of her degeneracy?

> To some new clime, or far more distant sky,
> O friendless and forsaken Virtue fly!

Do not expect, my Lord, that I should talk but poetry and enthusiasm. What day ever secured so much felicity, prevented so much mischief, as that festival on which these spurs were worn? Allowing credibility to legends, and sanctity to relics, what was the merit of martyrs but to themselves, what obligation was it to the world that they did not like to go to the devil? and why should we hoard up their teeth or their bones against the resurrection, when they would know where to find them wherever they were? In short, Saint William is my patron, his spurs are the dearest treasure of my museum, and your Lordship's letter shall never, while I have breath, be separated from them; yet obliged as I am, I shall think your Lordship and Lady Harcourt heretics if you do not both, at least once a year, make a pilgrimage to kiss the spurs. How can I say how much I am, &c.

P.S. Your Lordship's letter is dated Sunday, yet I received it only to-night, Wednesday.

1807. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 8, 1777.

Write to Sir George[1] about my own writings!—sure, Madam, you do not think I would for the world! What in the name of fortune could I write but affectation and false modesty?—and then he writes again, and is more civil; and I then protest I cannot spell my own name; and then—and then, I am in for a new correspondence. I beg to be excused.

Letter 1807.—[1] Sir George Macartney.

I have time to write to nobody but on business, or to a few that are used to my ways, and with whom I don't mind whether I stand on my head or my heels. I beg your honour's pardon, for you are one to whom I can write comfortably, though I know you keep my letters; and it is, I must say, no small merit or courage that I still continue to write to you, without having the fear of sense before my eyes; but since neither Aristotle nor Bossu have laid down rules for letters, and consequently have left them to their native wildness, I shall persist in saying whatever comes uppermost, and the less I am understood by anybody but the person I write to, so much the better. St. Paul is my model for letter-writing, who being a man of fashion, and very unaffected, never studies for what he shall say, but in one paragraph takes care of Timothy's soul, and in the next of his own cloak.

However, though I will not engage with him in person, I must beg your good Ladyship to assure Sir George, I mean Lord Macartney, how very sensible I am of his partiality to me; which at least I will never forfeit, for you may safely take your Bible oath to him that I have entirely forsworn being an author. *Quod scripsi, scripsi*; and the things must shift for themselves; but the clock has struck threescore; and if I have not written very foolishly, I will take care that I will not. My outward man is so weak and shattered, that in all probability the inward has its share in the *délabrement*; but as of that I can be no judge myself, and as I am sure nobody will tell me, it is rather wiser not to risk exposing myself. The catalogue of my collection will be no more worth reading than one of Christie's auction-books, and the prints are not yet half finished. Lord Macartney shall have one as soon as any man; he has always been kind to me; I have a very sincere regard for him, and particularly for

his infinite good nature, which I value in him, and in anybody, more than their parts. I rejoice in his good fortune, especially as it is due to his amiable qualities, for what is so glorious as to have the governed reward their governor[2]! The gratitude of a whole people is the noblest of all epitaphs.

As your Ladyship is so punctual in answering my questions, it is not seemly that I should be less exact. Nay, I shall imitate you so servilely, that my answers will be individually the same as yours—*I don't know.* I neither know whether Lord Harcourt's dog broke its heart, nor whether their Royal Highnesses of Cumberland are going to part. The French mystery that you say is not tellable, I suppose implies that his Majesty's first surgeon has had a hand in the future Dauphin. Truly, I thought that any indecency relative to divinity or government might be told, if accompanied with proper gravity. I have heard the late Lord Lyttelton discuss points of midwifery with the solemnity of a Solon. I don't mean that I am curious for the particulars. Louis XIII was made to believe that he had begotten two sons, though he never knew how; and if his successor has been persuaded that the talisman is removed, I have no doubt but the Queen will convince him that she is as fruitful, as the good of the monarchy requires. *En attendant,* and with all due respect for Lady Clermont's *intelligence,* I have little faith in conceptions that have been so long immaculate.

You ask when will American news come? A cargo is come, and if you are a sound courtier, Madam, you will believe every tittle, though it comes from Margate, which is not exactly the side of our island nearest to America. What is more strange, is, that though every one of our generals has gained a separate victory, every one of them

[2] Lord Macartney was at this time Governor of the Caribbean Islands.

is too modest to have sent any account of it. However, one captain of a sloop happened to be at the very point and moment of intelligence when all the accounts arrived at New York. In London, I hear, there are very contradictory letters. I am assured too that an officer is arrived, but the *Gazette* was so afflicted for the Margravine Dowager of Bareith, that it forgot to let us know what he says. In fine, it is believed that General Howe was on his march to Philadelphia; all the rest is thought to be hartshorn for the stocks and the lottery tickets. Don't you begin to think, Madam, that it is pleasanter to read history than to live it? Battles are fought, and towns taken in every page, but a campaign takes six or seven months to hear, and achieves no great matter at last. I dare to say Alexander seemed to the coffee-houses of Pella a monstrous while about conquering the world. As to this American war, I am persuaded it will last to the end of the century; and then it is so inconvenient to have all letters come by the post of the ocean! People should never go to war above ten miles off, as the Grecian states used to do. Then one might have a *Gazette* every morning at breakfast. I hope Bengal will not rebel in my time, for then one shall be eighteen months between hearing that the army has taken the field and is gone into winter quarters.

My nephew, George Cholmondeley[3] (for I am uncle to all the world), dined here to-day, and repeated part of a very good copy of verses from Sheridan to Mrs. Crewe. Has your Ladyship seen them? I trust they will not long retain their MS.-hood.

[3] George James Cholmondeley (d. 1830), son of Hon. and Rev. Robert Cholmondeley, second son of third Earl of Cholmondeley, and great-nephew of Horace Walpole.

1808. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 15, 1777.

I thank you much, dear Sir, for the sight of the book[1], which I return by Mr. Essex. It is not new to me that Burnet paid his court to the other side in the former part of his life: nor will I insist that he changed on conviction, which might be said, and generally is, for all converts, even those who shift their principles the most glaringly from interest. Duke Lauderdale, indeed, was such a dog that the honestest man must have been driven to detest him, however connected with him. I doubt Burnet could not be blind to his character, when he wrote the dedication. In truth, I have given up many of my saints; though not on the accusations of such wretches as Dalrymple and Macpherson: nor can men so much their opposites shake my faith in Lord Russell or Algernon Sidney. I do not relinquish those that sealed their integrity with their blood, but such as have taken thirty pieces of silver.

I was sorry you said we had any variance. We have differed in sentiments, but not in friendship. Two men, however unlike in principles, may be perfect friends, when both are sincere in their opinions, as we are. Much less shall we quarrel about those of our separate parties; since very few on either side have been so invariably consistent as you and I have been; and therefore we are more sure of each other's integrity, than that of men whom we know less and who did vary from themselves. As too you and I are only speculative persons, and no actors, it would be

Letter 1808.—Wrongly dated by C. Oct. 19.

[1] Cole's prefatory note on this letter is as follows:—'Mr. Essex going to Strawberry Hill to examine the workmen's bills, I sent Bp. Burnet's *Vindication of the Church of Scotland*, with the dedication in it to Duke Lauderdale: when he returned to Cambridge he brought me the book and in it the following letter.'

very idle to squabble about those that do not exist. In short, we are, I trust, in as perfect good humour with each other as we have been these forty years.

Pray do not hurry yourself about the anecdotes of Mr. Baker, nor neglect other occupations on that account. I shall certainly not have time to do anything this year. I expect the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester in very few days, must go to town as soon as they arrive, and shall probably have not much idle leisure before next summer. It is not very discreet to look even so far forward, nor am I apt any longer to lay distant plans. A little sedentary literary amusement is indeed no very lofty castle in the air, if I do lay the foundation in idea seven or eight months beforehand.

Whatever MSS. you lend me, I shall be very grateful for. They entertain me exceedingly, and I promise you we will not have the shadow of an argument about them. I do not love disputation, even with those most indifferent to me. *Your* pardon I most sincerely beg for having contested a single point with you. I am sure it was not with a grain of ill humour towards you; on the contrary, it was from wishing at that moment that you did not approve those I disliked—but even that I give up as unreasonable.

You are in the right, dear Sir, not to apply to Masters for any papers he may have relating to Mr. Baker. It is a trumpery fellow, from whom one would rather receive a refusal than an obligation.

I am sorry to hear Mr. Lort has the gout, and still more concerned that you still suffer from it. Such patience and temper as yours are the only palliatives. As the bootikins have so much abridged and softened my fits, I do not expect their return with the alarm and horror I used to do; and that is being cured of half the complaint. I had scarce

any pain last time, and did not keep my bed a day, and had no gout at all in either foot. May not I ask you if this is not some merit in the bootikins? To have cured me of my apprehensions is to me a vast deal, for now the intervals do not connect the fits. You will understand that I mean to speak a word to you in favour of the bootikins, for can one feel benefit, and not wish to impart it to a suffering friend? Indeed I am

Yours most sincerely,
Hor. Walpole.

1809. To Robert Jephson.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 17, 1777.

Mr. Garrick returned but two days ago, Sir, and I did not receive your tragedy[1] till this morning; so I could only read it once very rapidly and without any proper attention to particular passages; though, even so, some struck me as very fine.

You have encouraged me rather to criticize than flatter you; and you are in the right, for you have even profited of so weak a judgement as mine, and always improved the passages I objected to. Indeed, this is not quite a fair return, as it was inverting my method, by flattering, instead of finding fault with me; and a critic that meets with submission is apt to grow vain, and insolent, and capricious. Still as I am persuaded that all criticisms, though erroneous, *before* an author appeals to the public, are friendly, I will fairly tell you what parts of your tragedy have struck me as objectionable on so superficial a perusal.

In general, the language appears to me too metaphoric; especially as used by all the characters. You seem to me

Letter 1809.—[1] *The Law of Lombardy.*

to have imitated Beaumont and Fletcher, though your play is superior to all theirs. In truth, I think the diction is sometimes obscure from being so figurative, especially in the first act. Will you allow me to mention two instances?

> And craven Sloth, moulting his sleekless plumes,
> Nods drowsy wonder at th' adventurous wing
> That soars the shining azure o'er his head.

I own I do not understand why Sloth's plumes are sleekless; and I think that nodding wonder, and soaring azure, are expressions too Greek to be so close together, and too poetic for dialogue. The other passage is—

> The wise should watch th' event on Fortune's wheel,

and the seven following lines. The images are very fine, but demand more attention than common audiences are capable of. In *Braganza* every image is strikingly clear.

I am afraid I am not quite satisfied with the conduct of your piece. Bireno's conduct on the attack on the Princess seems too precipitate, and not managed. It is still more incredible that Paladore should confess his passion to his rival; and not less so, that a private man and a stranger should doubt the Princess's faith, when she had preferred him to his rival, a prince of the blood and her destined husband; and that without the smallest inquiry he should believe Bireno was admitted privately to her apartment, when on her not rejecting him, he might have access to her openly. One cannot conceive her meaning in offending her father by refusing so proper a match, and intriguing with the very man she was to marry, and whom she had refused. Paladore's credulity is not of a piece with the account given of his wisdom, which had made him admitted to the King's counsels.

I think, when you bestow Sophia on Paladore, you forget

that the King had declared he was obliged to give his daughter to a prince of his own blood; nor do I see any reason for Bireno's stabbing Ascanio, who was sure of being put to death when their treachery was discovered.

The character of the Princess is very noble and well sustained. When I said I did not conceive her meaning, I expressed myself ill. I did not suppose she did intrigue with Bireno; but I meant that it was not natural Paladore should suspect she did, since it is inconceivable that a princess should refuse her cousin in marriage for the mere caprice of intriguing with him. Had she managed her father, and, from dread of his anger, temporized about Bireno, Paladore would have had more reason to doubt her. Would it not too be more natural for Bireno to incense the King against Paladore, than to endeavour to make the latter jealous of Sophia? At least, I think Bireno would have more chance of poisoning Paladore's mind, if he did not discover to him that he knew of his passion. Forgive me, Sir, but I cannot reconcile to probability Paladore's believing that Sophia had rejected Bireno for a husband, though it would please her father, and yet chose to intrigue with him in defiance of so serious and extraordinary a law. Either his credulity or his jealousy reduce Paladore to a lover very unworthy of such a woman as Sophia. For her sake I wish to see him more deserving of her.

You are so great a poet, Sir, that you have no occasion to labour anything but your plots. You can express anything you please. If the conduct is natural, you will not want words. Nay, I rather fear your indulging your poetic vein too far, for your language is sometimes sublime enough for odes, which admit the height of enthusiasm, which Horace will not allow to tragic writers. You could set up twenty of our tragic authors with lines that you could afford to reject, though for no reason but their being too

fine, as in landscape-painting some parts must be under-coloured to give the higher relief to the rest. Will you not think me too difficult and squeamish, when I find the language of *The Law of Lombardy* too rich?

I beg your pardon, but it is more difficult for you to please me than anybody. I interest myself in your success and your glory. You must be perfect in all parts, in nature, simplicity, and character, as well as in the most charming poetry, or I shall not be content. If I dared, I would beg you to trust me with your plots, before you write a line. When a subject seizes you, your impetuosity cannot breathe till you have executed your plan. You must be curbed, as other poets want to be spurred. When your sketch is made, you must study the characters and the audience. It is not flattering *you* to say, that the least you have to do is to write your play.

1810. To Earl Harcourt.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 18, 1777.

I am sensibly obliged, my dear Lord, by your great goodness, and am most disposed to take the gardener you recommend, if I can. You are so good-natured you will not blame my suspense. I have a gardener that has lived with me above five-and-twenty years; he is incredibly ignorant, and a mule. When I wrote to your Lordship, my patience was worn out, and I resolved at least to have a gardener for flowers. On your not being able to give me one, I half consented to keep my own; not on his amendment, but because he will not leave me, presuming on my long suffering. I have offered him fifteen pounds a year to leave me, and when he pleads that he is old, and that nobody else will take him, I plead that I am old too, and that it is rather hard that I am not to have a few flowers, or a little

fruit as long as I live. I shall now try if I can make any compromise with him, for I own I cannot bear to turn him adrift, nor will starve an old servant, though never a good one, to please my nose and mouth. Besides, he is a Scot, and I will not be unjust, even to that odious nation; and the more I dislike him, the less will I allow my partiality to persuade me I am in the right. Everybody would not understand this, and the Scotch none of them; but I am sure your Lordship will, and will not be angry that I dally with you. I know how strong my prejudices are, and am always afraid of them. As long as they only hate they are welcome, but prejudices are themselves so much Scots, that I must not let them be my *friends* and govern me. I will take the liberty of letting you know, if I can persuade the serpent that has reduced my little Eden to be as nasty and barren as the Highlands, to take a pension and a yellow ribbon.

Lady Harcourt or your Lordship may frisk or vagary anywhere separately: I shall not be alarmed, nor think it by choice. Nay, if it were, where could I either mend yourself? I have so high an opinion of Miss Fauquiere[1], that, with all her regard for your Lordship, I believe you are the last man from whom she would bear to hear a gallantry. So you see, my Lord, how awkwardly you set about mischief. It is plain you are a novice, and have no talent for it, and therefore I advise you as a friend, not to attempt what would not become you: you are like a young tragic author, that meaning to draw a politic villain, makes him so very wicked, and lay such gross traps, that they would not catch an elephant. One laughs at his tragedy, but loves his heart. I am sure Miss Fauquiere agrees with

LETTER 1810.—[1] Jane Georgiana, daughter of William Fauquier, of Hanover; m. (1787), as his second wife, George Venables-Vernon, second Baron Vernon, first cousin of Earl Harcourt; d. 1823.

me in desiring to remain the confidants of the two perfect characters of the drama.

Your Lordship's most devoted,

Hor. Walpole.

1811. To the Rev. William Mason.

Arlington Street, Oct. 24, 1777.

Your letter's date made it still more welcome than their predecessors. I wish myself with you without envy, and think of Nuneham with more pleasure than I dare tell Lord Harcourt. I am delighted too with the prospect of seeing you so soon. My letter's date tells you why I do not instantly obey you. I am here and must be so some days, and the delineator is locked up at Strawberry, or I hope you do not think I am so selfish as to prefer a plaything to your amusement. I will send it the moment I return merely to satisfy you, for Mr. Storer has already improved his idea so much, as to obviate I believe most of your objections. He is making me another, and honestly offered me to change it for me—and he has made a stand to it too, that remedies many inconveniences; but that I have not got yet, nor just now can I attend but to the present occupation.

The Duke and Duchess arrived yesterday. His R. H. is and looks better than I expected, not pulled though pale; his leg is still swelled and he is lame, but it has not opened; and his voice is strong and spirits good. The Duchess looks in health, but is much leaner and looks older. I have not seen them a moment alone, for they have not been a moment alone; all I know is, the Duke has written to ask when. The answer was not come half an hour ago. It is decent I should stay two or three days; and then if I was great enough to be proud of

lowering myself, I should say, I shall return to my plough. No, nor am I one of those, who, though so great, ought to be sent to plough.

I am much obliged to you for your offering, yet though I like the occasion of its becoming a relic, I cannot accept it. Lord Harcourt has given me the glorious and immortal spurs of King William; can I receive his uncle's boot-heel[1] into the same sanctuary! when you want to be a Cardinal, you shall present it to his Grace of York, or to any of the *et ceteras* that you do not see from Nuneham.

Pray tell Lord and Lady Harcourt that I have been a perfect courtier for them, and said everything in the world, and am commanded to return everything in the world. I was impatient lest all England, and still more, all Scotland, should be beforehand with me in addresses; one Englishman offered one this very morning—*mais attendez-moi sous l'orme.* There we shall talk more at our ease.

1812. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Oct. 26, 1777.

It is past my usual period of writing to you; which would not have happened but from an uncommon, and indeed, considering the moment, an extraordinary dearth of matter. I could have done nothing but describe suspense, and every newspaper told you that. Still we know nothing certain of the state of affairs in America; the very existence where, of the Howes, is a mystery. The General is said to have beaten Washington, Clinton to have repulsed three attacks, and Burgoyne to be beaten[1]. The second alone is credited. Impatience is very high, and

Letter 1811. — [1] Mason offered this relic of Charles I to Horace Walpole, stating that it had been preserved in his family ever since that King lost it before the gates of Hull.

Letter 1812. — [1] No decisive news from America reached England until Dec. 1.

uneasiness increases with every day. There is no sanguine face anywhere, but many alarmed ones. The pains taken, by circulating false reports, to keep up some confidence, only increase the dissatisfaction by disappointing. Some advantage gained may put off clamour for some months: but I think, the longer it is suspended, the more terrible it will be; and how the war should end but in ruin, I am not wise enough to conjecture. France suspends the blow, to make it more inevitable. She has suffered us to undo ourselves: will she allow us time to recover? We have begged her indulgence in the first: will she grant the second prayer?

The Duke of Gloucester is arrived. *That* is miraculous. He is almost well, and *that* is less surprising. Mr. James finds his face plumper than at Rome: he is certainly not leaner, nor yellow, though very pale; and his voice shows his lungs are good. In short, the remainder of his illness is in his right leg; which is still swelled, and very lame when he stands too much, as he is too apt to do. The Duchess has more symptoms of what she has suffered than his Royal Highness; and as she is much fallen away, and even shrunk, her face looks much older, which must necessarily happen till her skin fills up again. The Princess Sophia is a fine child, though less pretty than she was. The Prince a pretty boy. If there is anything more to tell you, it is yet to come.

Lord Orford seems to be growing childish, which is the most eligible state for him, as the safest: but I depend on nothing. The events that I shall probably see are sufficient at my time of life, without dipping into a futurity that may be nothing to me.

You have heard of the inundation at Petersburgh[2]. That

[2] In the preceding September. It was caused by a violent storm, which raised the waters of the Neva far above the ordinary level. Many houses were destroyed and trees torn up.

ill wind produced luck to somebody. As the Empress had not distressed objects enough among her own people to gratify her humanity, she turned the torrent of her bounty towards that unhappy relict the Duchess of Kingston, and ordered her Admiralty to take particular care of the marvellous yatch that bore Messalina and her fortune. Pray mind that I bestow the latter Empress's name on the Duchess, only because she married a second husband in the lifetime of the first. Amongst other benevolences, the Czarina lent her Grace a courier to dispatch to England—I suppose to acquaint Lord Bristol that he is not a widower. That courier brought a letter from a friend to Dr. Hunter, with the following anecdote. Her Imperial Majesty proposed to her brother of China to lay waste a large district that separates their two empires, lest it should, as it has been on the point of doing, produce war between them; the two empires being at the two extremities of the world, not being distance enough to keep the peace. The ill-bred Tartar sent no answer to so humane a project. On the contrary, he dispersed a letter to the Russian people, in which he tells them that a woman—he might have said the Minerva of the French litterati—had proposed to him to extirpate all the inhabitants of a certain region belonging to him, but that he knew better what to do with his own country: however, he could but wonder that the people of all the Russias should still submit to be governed by a creature that had assassinated her husband.—Oh, if she had pulled the Ottoman by the nose in the midst of Constantinople, as she intended to do, this savage would have been more civilized. I doubt the same rude monarch is still on the throne, who would not suffer Prince Czernichew to enter his territories, when sent to notify her Majesty's *hereditary* succession to her husband; but bade him be told, he would not receive an ambassador from a murderess. Is

it not shocking that the law of nations, and the law of politeness, should not yet have abrogated the laws of justice and good sense in a nation reckoned so civilized as the Chinese? What an age do we live in, if there is still a country where the crown does not take away all defects! Good night!

1813. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Arlington Street, Oct. 28, 1777.

The Ursulines of Trent seem to have prayed for more than the Duke's life, for he is not emaciated nor yellow; and though one sees he has been ill, his voice is strong and his spirits good, and nothing remains of his distemper but a swelled leg; and that is decreased since his arrival. The Duchess retains more traces of her sufferings; is much leaner, and looks older, though not so much as I expected. Nothing is settled about his going to court. Pray remember, Madam, that these are stars in eclipse, or I would not talk of them, for it is very vulgar to be interested about princes and princesses.

I know no more of America than the ministers do. It is not quite fashionable to talk of that. The tone is, just to ask with an air of anxiety, if there is anything new, and then to be silent. A general has a fine opportunity now, for if he was to reduce a pigeon-house, I believe the King would go to St. Paul's to hear a *Te Deum*. The accession-day was not full, and those that came are gone again. The town is as empty and dull as Newmarket between the meetings. The only event I have heard since I arrived is Lady Melbourne's being brought to bed of two girls at seven months, and they are both dead; but *she* had secured a son first. Oh yes, the Czarina has acknowledged the Duchess of Kingston, and taken as much care of her in her yacht, in

the inundation, as tender King James did of his dogs and his trunk when he was shipwrecked in Scotland. This great princess has been rather uncivilly treated by her brother the Emperor of China. She proposed to him to lay waste (a modern way of making peace) the country that separates their empires, lest they should quarrel for it. His Tartar Majesty did not send so much as a card in return; but he did write to all the Russians, I don't know by what post, to tell them that a woman, *soi-disant* Empress of Russia, had proposed to him to depopulate a country belonging to him, but that he knew better what to do with it. Strange ignorance to suppose that inhabitants enrich a country! In conclusion, his Majesty expresses his surprise that so great and wise a nation as the Russians should still submit to be governed by a creature that murdered her own husband: and yet we call the Chinese a polished nation! Mercy on us, if crowned heads were to tell one another their own!

I shall return to Strawberry in a day or two, where I think I cannot have less to tell your Ladyship than from the capital.

1814. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Oct. 30, 1777.

I must confess, Madam, I cannot agree with your Ladyship in thinking Miss Barley, and Miss Oats, and Miss Rawhides, and Miss Beesom, and Miss Soap, &c., so much in the wrong for not consorting with a dancing-master's daughters. The young ladies above named are of the best families in Ampthill, ancient gentry, that settled there before the Conquest. I know a dancing-master's is reckoned a more liberal profession, and more likely to advance him to the Irish peerage. But does Mr. Kit pay in proportion to the

American war? Has he signed any address for it? Will not people learn to dance, though we should never recover the colonies? By the good people of England, does not his Majesty mean his faithful gentry, yeomanry, and tradesmen of the kingdom? In his speech to Parliament does he ever think of dancing-masters and hair-dressers? Are they not aliens? Is his Majesty ever in their books? Or are the nobility, who are in debt to everybody else? Indeed, indeed, Madam, I approve the spirit of the young ladies; they feel themselves; and I dare to say could scratch out the eyes of every rebellious American on the face of the earth.

The post is come in from that part of the world, and Lord Howe and General Howe were, very well thank you! two months ago. General Washington has received a defeat in the City of London, and General Burgoyne on the banks of the Seine. The *Gazette* itself knows no more.

I do not know that the Duchess of D.[1] has been positively ill. She thought her nerves were much affected, but it proved to be only a disorder on her spirits, occasioned by her being tired of Chatsworth. She is much better since her removal.

I am ignorant of what Mr. Morrice got by his sister's death, and whether she has got anything. I have been a week in town without being a jot more informed in any one point, and therefore shall return to-morrow to my castle, whence, at least, my ignorance will be more excusable.

1815. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Monday night, Nov. 3.

St. John is a false prophet, and of the house of Bolingbroke; the angel of the Church of Philadelphia is a blind

Letter 1814.—[1] The Duchess of Devonshire.

Letter 1815. — Misplaced by C. amongst letters of Nov. 1779. (See *Notes and Queries*, July 7, 1900.)

buzzard, and cannot see a yard beyond his nose. A heathen Cupid, with a bandage over his eyes, is worth a hundred of such blundering cherubim, that, like bats, fly about in the dark, and take a farthing candle for the sun. There, my Lady, there's Washington beaten[1], and Philadelphia taken! Commend me to Revelations! If your angel would be seeing, why did not he put on his spectacles and hover over Arnold[2], who has beaten the vapouring Burgoyne, and destroyed his magazines? Carleton, who was set aside for General Hurlothrumbo, is gone to save him and the remains of his army, if he can. On Saturday night, not a minister but was packing up: yesterday morning, they ran about, shouting and huzzaing, like madmen!

Arlington Street, Tuesday, four o'clock[3].

I wrote the above few lines last night, Madam, and then heard that no confirmation was come. I most humbly beg pardon of Monseigneur St. Michael, or St. Ithuriel, or St. George Fox, or whoever is archangel of Philadelphia, for too lightly crediting Bamber Gascoyne's[4] or Port Glasgow's lies. I am this minute come to town, and find that the ship *Argo* is as much arrived as the sloop *Isis*, which turns out to be the *Asia*, which is a large ship that has been long

[1] Nov. 2, 1777. 'At daybreak an express arrived from Bamber Gascoigne, at Liverpool, with a New York *Gazette*, that was said to have come to Glasgow by a ship from New York. This *Gazette* said that a person from Howe's army had arrived there and brought an account of three actions between Howe and Washington, on the 11th, 12th, and 13th of September, in which Washington had been totally defeated, and his army entirely dispersed. Another ship had met the *Isis* at sea, and was told it was bringing *glorious news*. The ministers and courtiers received this news with transports of joy, that did great honour to Washington.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 160.)

[2] Benedict Arnold (1741–1801), who took the chief part in forcing Burgoyne to surrender at Saratoga (Oct. 17, 1777). In 1780, having been discovered in an intrigue with the English general Clinton (to whom he had promised to give up the fort at West Point), he took refuge on an English man-of-war. He entered the English military service, and received the rank of Brigadier.

[3] Hitherto printed as a separate letter.

[4] M.P. for Liverpool.

on a cruise. *It is believed*, from two or three letters from New York, that Washington has been beaten[5]; yet nothing more is known of the action or its consequences; and as Howe has sent no account, it does not seem to be any great matter. The papers to-day are full of a resuscitation and victory of Burgoyne, which even the dates show to be manifest lies. It is doubted whether he will not have been forced to lay down his arms[6].

I received your Ladyship's letter, with the extract of your *beau-frère's*[7], this morning, and another short one this minute. I have not a moment's time to speak on either; but you may easily imagine all the sentiments the extract roused, and which wanted but a spark.

I must be excused, just now, from answering, or even thinking of, Mr. Selwyn's query about I don't know what. You have not told me where the letter is, nor to what admiral; and, to say truth, I am not sorry, for I never had less time to solve historic riddles of ages past.

If I learn anything certain by to-morrow night, I will certainly write again; your Ladyship and Lord Ossory must be anxious about Mr. F. and Lord Chewton, and I will neglect nothing that can tend to quiet your alarm; though, I must own, I doubt whether this whole history of Washington is not coined, to balance for a moment the destruction of Burgoyne's army, and the loss of Canada that may follow.

1816. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Arlington Street, Nov. 6, 1777.

Your Ladyship will be so well content with knowing that nothing ill happened to Mr. Fitzpatrick in a battle of

[5] Apparently a reference to the battle of Brandywine, which took place in Sept. 1777.

[6] Burgoyne surrendered to Gates on Oct. 17, 1777.

[7] Hon. Richard Fitzpatrick, at this time serving with his regiment in America.

three days[1], that you will not repine at his having gathered no laurels in them. He really was not engaged any one of the three days, nor Lord Chewton neither; not that the latter was ill, or less from want of spirit in your *beau-frère*; but as neither of them have any *fanfaronnade* about them, they did not hot-headedly thrust themselves into more danger than their companions; and as General Washington was so easily beaten without a stroke being struck, Mr. Fitzpatrick and Lord Chewton could not acquire more honour than General Howe himself, who has been presented with a victory that he has not earned, and of which he probably will not hear this month.

In short, not only no confirmation is come of the New York *Gazette*, but the ministers say they have traced the two ships that brought the news to Liverpool and Glasgow, and have discovered that they were sent by Panchaud[2] on some stock-jobbing errand. If this is true, they have good reason to be peevish, for never were people more egregiously duped. I have not time to say more now, but I am happy to take off some anxiety from Ampthill.

1817. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Nov. 7, 1777.

You will have seen in the papers, before you can receive this, such accounts of a total defeat of Washington, that you might wonder at my silence if I did not say a word: that word must be, that I very much doubt the fact; and, if it was known at New York so long ago as the supposed *Gazette* thence says, it would be wonderful, indeed, that General Howe should keep it a profound secret from the Government here, whom he might suppose a little in-

Letter 1816.—[1] The battle of Brandywine, which began on Sept. 11, 1777. [2] A banker in Paris.

terested to hear some good news or other after a long dearth.

The first breath of this report was said to come from France yesterday sevennight. On Sunday morning early it was asserted as a fact by a New York *Gazette* arrived at Liverpool. On Tuesday I came to town, intending to write to you; but, finding no confirmation come, I thought it prudent not to assert what I knew no better. From Tuesday to Friday night is a long interval on such an occasion; and, though some still say they believe Washington beaten, they do not use, I observe, much stronger terms than *received a check*. One has heard of towns burnt to the ground, that have turned out to be a chimney on fire. In the meantime I tell you all I know, and I am not apt to believe more of things at such a distance.

Of what there is no doubt is, *the check*[1] Burgoyne *has received*, and the distress of his army, that the last accounts left in danger of being starved. There have been accounts of his recovering the blow, but I cannot find one person who believes that. In one word, it is a very serious moment; and, without greater views, the misery of so many who have relations and friends both in Howe's and Burgoyne's armies is terrible. It is known that the latter had twenty-six officers wounded; and as their names are not come, ten times the number may be suffering the worst anxiety. The distance of the war augments its horrors almost as much as its expense, and makes it grow every day more irksome.

I have often seen your friend Sir John Dick since the Duke's return, and he inquires most kindly after you.

I have no private news to send you of any sort. The town is still empty. I come now and then to see the Duke

Letter 1817.—[1] Burgoyne surrendered to Gates at Saratoga on Oct. 17 1777.

and Duchess. He does not recover of his lameness, and in general I find people think he looks worse than it appears to me. She looks infinitely better than at her arrival, but *she* has a perfect constitution.

I see no prospect of an end to this American war, but from our inability to carry it on: and what can that produce but a war *from* France—I don't say *with* France; for where can we attack them if we lose America; and where are we to be attacked but in our own islands and the East Indies—which are not quite near enough to assist each other? There is no looking towards such a prospect.

If Burgoyne's army is destroyed, little force left in Canada, only seven thousand men in New York, Howe's army not increased by his tedious voyage, and three battles with Washington, if true—where are we to stamp and conjure up new armies? And what will less armies achieve, which such large ones have not compassed in three campaigns? We have lost Boston, have got New York, and perhaps Philadelphia. If the Americans have fought, they will fight. If they have not, can you make them? And can you conquer them without beating them? Can you maintain the country when you have conquered it? Will a destroyed country maintain your army? And can this country maintain or recruit it, when you can already get no recruits but from Germany? We are like Lord Holland paying the debts of his sons; he ruined himself, and left them beggars.

1818. To Robert Jephson.

Arlington Street, Nov. 8, 1777.

The justice you do me, Sir, in forgiving the liberty I have taken with you from sincere zeal for your glory, is still an

Letter 1818.—Not in C.; reprinted from *Notes and Queries*, Aug. 6, 1870.

uncommon instance of a great poet's bearing to have his works criticized: and though true poets are not frequent, one that can endure the objections of a friend is a greater rarity, and displays as much the coolness of good sense as his writings the warmth of imagination. It was conviction of the torrent of the latter, though ignorant of the extent of the former, that made me presume to offer my opinion on your plans before you should let loose your poetry on the execution; thinking you could not be offended at objections to the design, though you might be displeased at disapprobation of any of your verses; and indeed liking them too much to be ready to wish them effaced myself. You have convinced me, Sir, that I neither understand the latitude of your patience, nor your good nature; and yet I have put both to the proof. I have ventured to try both to the utmost, nor reserved any criticisms in store.

You will be so good as to observe that there were but two faults I found: improbability in the conduct, and too figurative expression in the dialogue. You have obviated part of the former by the corrections you have condescended to make, and perhaps have condescended too much: for if I alone have made the observations, I am so far from attributing it, as you are so obliging to do, to more penetration, that I doubt it is rather owing to singularity or the peevishness of age,—and perhaps men who have a little reading, and some experience, are worse judges of a drama that is calculated for everybody than a more informed auditor. An infinitely greater man, Molière, trusted the feelings of his old housekeeper more than those of Boileau, another man, much greater—I can scarce venture to say than I: for what am I? to name myself at all, looks as if I had some pretensions to something. I assure you I only meant to prefer the housekeeper to myself, but arranged my words so awkwardly that, to my

great astonishment, I found myself *à côté de Boileau.* Yet I am not quite modest, nor possess your modesty, Sir. I am still a little obstinate on one point, I mean in general; and that is, metaphoric diction in tragedy; and forgive me once more if I do not submit to your argument in its defence, that Shakespeare's, Beaumont's, Fletcher's, and Massinger's pieces, though crowded with figures, are still tasted. I believe the most figurative passages in Shakespeare are not the most admired. Dr. Johnson goes much farther, far beyond truth, and says that that most sublime genius never attempted to be sublime without being bombast,—but indubitably Shakespeare is never so superior to all mankind as when he is most simple and natural. Recollect Constance, Arthur, Juliet, Desdemona, or Hotspur's mockeries of Glendower. What strikes one's soul with horror like Macbeth's account of the two grooms when he has murdered Duncan? The passage is foolishly ridiculed by Voltaire, because he is incapable of feeling that simplicity is the height of the sublime.

> When he himself can his quietus make
> With a bare bodkin:—

Henry IV's image of the cabin-boy *in a night so rude*, and Richard II's sensibility to his favourite horse being pleased with the load of Bolinbroke—are texts out of the book of nature, in comparison of which the works of all other writers in every language that I understand are to me apocryphal.

But to descend from enthusiasm, which seizes me whenever I name our First of Men, I think there is a plain reason why the metaphoric style of that age is not to be imitated now. In the first place allow me (and it is a question I must beg) that chastity of criticism was not known in that age. Therefore, representations were new; whatever the authors pleased to produce was thankfully accepted; and even the

most turgid and unintelligible passages of those writers, mouthed out emphatically by popular actors, are still received with applause by the multitude. Perhaps I suspect that the natural parts of their plays were what ensured to them permanent approbation. Be that as it may, the tragedies of the four you cite, Sir, were received with admiration, and have been handed down to us with that imprimatur. You will grant me that our language is altered since 1625, and many passages in the four were understood then, which are total darkness now—yet are repeated because they are familiar to our ears, though lost on our understanding. You will say I make no distinction between obsolete dictions and metaphor, but all I mean is, that obscurity, being accepted by prescription, cannot be cited as a precedent for any kind of obscurity that is new. Nor if fashion tolerated metaphoric language in that age, can it prove that it is the true taste. It is a general objection to tragedy, that it is an unnatural elevation of nature. Its sentiments are exaggerated; surely if those deviators from nature are amplified by the expression, tragedy wanders still further from its aim—the representation of the passions and conduct of mankind. Of late the world has been forced to accept a mezzo-termine, the *tragédie bourgeoise.* Kings, knaves, and heroines could not be persuaded to lower their style. Their etiquette would not allow them to be natural. We were forced to descend amongst ourselves, and seek nature where it grovelled yet. I am sensible that our language has not the charming and facile grace of the French for conversation. In dialogue (I do not mean theatric) we have never succeeded. Lord Shaftsbury meant to attain the majesty of Plato, missed his way, and found himself in the clouds. Yet, what is impossible to genius? *The Man of Mode, The Careless Husband,* and Vanbrugh, have shown that our tongue can

utter the genteelest language. *Jane Shore* is a perfect tragedy, both in conduct and language, though not a capital one. There are parts of *Oroonoko* and *The Fatal Marriage* worthy a disciple of Shakespeare. It would look like flattery to name *Braganza*; which I own, though I have again examined it very carefully, I prefer to *The Law of Lombardy*: yet, if not quite content with the latter, you may depend upon it I shall not let my objections be known. Mr. Garrick does not know them, to whom I have returned your play. My observations were those of a sincere friend. Were I insolent enough to think my sentiments a standard, I hope I am honest enough to conceal them but the more carefully. I have ever to my little power made the interests of your fame my own. I ventured my credit with you rather than act a base part, and applaud when I was not satisfied. You have accepted my duty like a man; and I shall willingly give my judgement as a critic if you are convinced that I am, Sir,

Your sincere friend,
Hor. Walpole.

1819. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Nov. 13, 1777.

I have had nothing to add to my accounts, Madam, nor have now more than you will see in the papers.

There is come in a ship from Halifax, which is not next-door to Philadelphia, the captain of which was told by another captain from New York, that Sir W. Howe had had an engagement with Washington, and had the advantage; Washington having lost, some say, fifteen hundred men—some five hundred men. But the singular part of this story is, that captain of captains says the action passed on the 25th, and not the 11th, which does not prove

that the New York *Gazette* of the 29th was very authentic. In short, it is the house that Jack built, except that it loses a story in the hands of every new builder. Nobody knows what to make of such a cloud, which has occasioned as much reasoning, and consequently as much false reasoning as ever was heard.

What is believed is, that Captain Tollemache, Lady Bridget's husband, is killed in a duel at New York, by a Captain Pennington[1], on a foolish quarrel about humming a tune. There is strange fatality attends the house of Tollemache: two brothers[2] drowned and a third killed! My poor niece, Lady Dysart, who is all goodness and good nature, will be very unhappy, as she was about the last brother! But indeed if she can love the eldest, it would not be just to be indifferent to the others; though, except the second, I never heard much good of any of them. I know which is the worst.

I have seen George[3] twice since his return from Ampthill. You have done him a great deal of good; he was in spirits yesterday; this morning there was a little relapse. He is gone, I believe, to Lady Holland, but returns to-morrow, as his mother is come to town not in a good way.

I hope you saw and was delighted with the parody of Burgoyne's dispatch. I never saw more humour, nor better kept up. It is as much admired as it deserves. General Swagger is said to be entrenched at Saratoga, but I question whether he will be left at leisure to continue his Commentaries: one Arnold is mighty apt to interrupt him.

LETTER 1819.—[1] John Pennington, cr. Baron Muncaster, Oct. 21, 1783; d. 1813.

[2] Hon. George and Hon. William Tollemache, drowned at sea in 1760 and 1776 respectively.

[3] George Selwyn.

1820. To Earl Harcourt.

Nov. 26, 1777.

I am quite ashamed, my dear Lord, to receive such a mark of your Lordship's too kind partiality in consulting my judgement rather than your own; nor have I any other way of answering it than by preferring your honour to my own prejudices, as I did, when I presumed to think that, had *they* sent, you ought to have gone to court. It is very vexatious to pay eighty guineas for a daub; but as I know your scrupulous punctuality in performing your duties, permit me to say that I think your regard for the person that bespoke the picture should preponderate; and that even paying for it, and then giving it away, distinguishes between your respect for your father, and your sensibility to the neglect shown to his memory.

May I add that there may even be in two or three years *two* reasons to *one* for your keeping the picture? Your Lordship must have heard a saying of your great grandfather, that had much wit in it—that grandfathers should love their grandsons, as the latter revenge their quarrel by wishing their fathers dead—do not *sons* then punish parents?

I wish you as rich as Crœsus, my dear Lord, but impatient as I am to see you call out all the beauties of Nuneham, I had rather see you dig in your own garden than not have you a *Harcourt sans reproche*; I mean that even Dr. Hunter should not be able to invent a blemish that would stick. The poor lady you couple with him can only repeat, not invent. My greatest ambition is to admire you, and prove myself, my good Lord,

Your Lordship's most sincere friend
and devoted servant,
Hor. Walpole.

1821. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Dec. 4, 1777.

This letter will not be preceded by nine postilions blowing horns; but should steal into Florence as modestly as a Roman general, who at once hoped to obtain the honour of an ovation. The second part of my dispatch will only beg you not to despair of the republic.

After living a whole month upon a New York *Gazette*, and tired of asking if, *No news yet?* Sir William Howe's aide-de-camp arrived on the first: he confirmed the account of two, not three, engagements between the General and Dictator Washington. In the first[1], Howe certainly had the advantage; and in the second[2], so far, that Washington, having attacked him in his post, was repelled, and is retired into the Jerseys, the King having been restored to the sovereignty of Philadelphia. You are to believe that though Howe lost eleven hundred men, particularly Hessians, Washington suffered more: but even the *Gazette* does not enjoin you to suppose that the latter is totally defeated. On the contrary, for fear too small an army should effect too great things, you are authorized to figure the provincial army in the Jerseys as still consisting of 11,000 men; and there are a few reasons to think that it may now be as large as the Congress or the provinces, no longer checked, may please. Sir William delays the pursuit, as the passage of the Delaware is not yet clear. The Lord his brother is besieging a tough fort[3], and has already lost a sixty-four gun ship and a frigate.

Letter 1821. — [1] The battle of Brandywine.

[2] The battle of Germantown, on Oct. 4, 1777.

[3] Mud or Fort Island, near the junction of the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers. The *Augusta* man-of-war and the *Merlin* sloop ran aground during an attack on the fort on Oct. 22, 1777.

General Clinton has marched to relieve or find Burgoyne, but was forced to be content with taking two forts[4], and showing uncommon valour. The next paragraph will tell you why his expedition was unnecessary.

On Tuesday night came news from Carleton at Quebec, which indeed had come from France earlier, announcing the total annihilation (as to America) of Burgoyne's army. Carleton declares he has no *authentic* information; but from all the intelligence he can get, and which he believes, Burgoyne, after dispatching Colonel Fraser[5] with 1,000 men to seek provisions, which whole body with their commander was cut off, fought desperately to extricate himself; but, numbers increasing and pouring upon him, he had been forced to lay down his arms, and the whole remaining army, which some say still consisted of 5,000, but probably were reduced much lower, surrendered themselves prisoners, and are to be transported to England, on parole of not serving more in America—no bad circumstance for us, if they were but here? Burgoyne is said to be wounded in three places; his vanquisher Arnold is supposed to be dead of his wounds.

You may imagine this occasions some consternation; but none at all, I assure you, in the Temple of Concord. Unless Crœsus besieged the senate with an army of ingots, I do not believe there would be a deserter from the cause of *Sacra Fames*. There have been indeed warm skirmishes in both the Temples of Honour and Virtue, Lord Chatham himself heading the troops of the opposition[6], but without making any impression. Lord George Germain has received several wounds from Charles Fox; and Burke and Wedder-

[4] Forts Montgomery and Clinton, on the west bank of the Hudson river, taken by General Clinton on Oct. 6, 1777.

[5] Brigadier-General Simon Fraser, youngest son of Hugh Fraser, of Balnain, Inverness-shire, killed on Oct. 7, 1777, at Behmus Heights, near Saratoga.

[6] The Opposition moved on Dec. 2 in both Houses for a committee to consider the state of the nation.

burn were on the point of a closer engagement; but it was made up[7]. The Parliament is to be adjourned to-morrow till after the holidays.

What will be next, I, the most unwise of men, do not guess. Some, a little wiser, think the wisest could not tell what should be. The opposition, who, decried as they have been, have at least not been contradicted in their prophecies by events, think that, as Canada is left defenceless, and New York is not overcrowded with defenders, the whole force of New England, which is entire, as Burgoyne experienced, may march to Quebec, or join Washington, and besiege Clinton with as numerous an army as they choose to have. In that case, Sir William Howe must abandon Philadelphia, and march to the succour of New York.

You may be sure the uninformed expect that, as America is so near lost, the army will be recalled. You may guess, too, that I, who do not doat on France, nor desire a war at home, should not be sorry we had a little more defence; but who will ask my advice, or take it? We are, in fact, very near the end of the American war, but I doubt we are at the beginning of our troubles. Disgrace is the present chapter, and sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. If disappointment opens our eyes, it has, like a true friend, given us bitter but wholesome counsel. If obstinacy is mistaken for firmness, it will obtain at last, as it generally does, its genuine appellation.

I am sorry you are losing your nephew and Lady Lucy, and more sorry you continue troubled with lameness. Though I am a little younger, you must trust my greater experience. The gout will bear no contradiction. You must submit to what it gives, and what it leaves. I do not walk a mile in a twelvemonth, and suffer if I stand a quarter of an hour; but what then? There are chairs for

[7] See the following letter.

us old folks, and in this age easy ones everywhere. Within these two months, sleep, which has been my constant support and food, has begun to grow coy. Can I wonder? At first I had a mind to find a cause; but I recollected that twenty years ago I should have said to myself, if a person of sixty complained, 'The poor soul does not consider it is threescore!' We must part with all at once, or see it slip away by degrees. We cannot even choose which; nor should know how to decide, if we might. I endeavour to take patiently everything as it comes. You have a better temper, and can do so more easily. The vision has been pleasant enough upon the whole to both of us. Thank God, it has been no worse! Let us, while we last, hope it will not be. If we combat age, by pretending to believe that its consequences are accidents that may be removed, we only deceive and torment ourselves, but find no remedy. Adieu!

1822. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Friday night, late, Dec. 5, 1777.

Send for Lord Chatham! they had better send for General Washington, Madam—or at least for our troops back, which would be a little less disgraceful than having them returned on their hands. There is another express come to-day with the loss of Ticonderoga, which is very credible when there was no army left to defend it. I suppose Quebec will follow. General Howe must probably return to defend New York. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

I must own I had not sorted my feelings into different drawers, and therefore cannot one day pull out one, and grieve for burning a town, or destroying a beautiful province; and the next day take out an assortment of compassion for an army that marched under such a savage proclamation as Burgoyne's. The accounts that are come, own that the

provincials have treated him and his fellow-prisoners with the utmost humanity. On the other hand, I must contradict myself, and do justice to General Clinton, who spared all he could when he took the two forts. We have been horribly the aggressors; and I must rejoice that the Americans are to be free, as they had a right to be, and as I am sure they have shown they deserve to be. I cannot answer for what our troops would have done, had they conquered; and less what the spirit would have done that sent them. Lord Chatham is an Irishman: he would recall the troops and deny the independence of the Americans. He is in the right to recall an army that cannot conquer it; but a country that will not be conquered, and that cannot be, is but in an odd sort of state of dependence. He seems to be afraid of their condescending even to trade with us. No, Madam, we do not want ministers that would protract our difficulties. I look on them but as beginning now, and am far from thinking that there is any man, or set of men, able enough to extricate us. I own there are very able Englishmen left, but they happen to be on t'other side of the Atlantic. If his Majesty hopes to find them here, I doubt he will be mistaken: it is not worth his while to change hands.

The debates have continued warm in the House of Commons. Charles Fox on Wednesday told Lord George he hoped to see him brought to a second trial. Burke having called Wedderburn Lord George's counsel, Wedderburn grew outrageous, told Burke he knew not how to behave with good manners, but he would be respected by him both in public and private. Burke went out of the House, and, they say, made a signal to Wedderburn to follow him; but their friends interposed, and it was made up. Yesterday Charles and the Attorney-General had high words that did not go so far. Lord Chatham was in the other House to-day, but I know nothing of what was done.

Mr. Acland[1] is not dead, but wounded; and his poor wife is gone to him at Saratoga, from Quebec.

I am grateful for your Ladyship's hint, and, indeed, did hope to be invited to keep my gambols at Ampthill, which I do most steadfastly design; though I was alarmed last night with a swelled finger, but it is gone; and this evening it has snowed. However, I am not in a mood to be disheartened easily; and as your Ladyship's spirits seem to be affected with every sort of wind that blows, *my propriety* shall come and represent the necessity of submission to what one wishes, and endeavour to comfort you for the loss of everybody that you don't know.

Dec. 6th.

Thank you, Madam, for the extracts, which are sensible indeed. I have time to say no more of them. Yesterday was warm again in the Lords. The Earls of Chatham and Gower squabbled again on the Indians, and the former was in the wrong again. He talked of accusing my Lord of York[2] of his libel, and was not in the wrong. It looks as if we were to continue the war; but as it is tiresome to wait two or three months for a skirmish, we are to have a war with France, of which we can have news every day.

Pray return my compliments, Madam, to Lady Gertrude, and tell her I am impatient to kiss her, though I kissed a Princess last night that was my own flesh and blood—but is it *proper* to own so much?

Letter 1822.—[1] Major John Dyke Acland married (1771) Lady Christiana Caroline Henrietta Fox, sixth daughter of first Earl of Ilchester. Major Acland was wounded and made prisoner on Oct. 7, 1777. Lady Harriet Acland made her way down the Hudson river in an open boat in order to join him in the enemy's camp. She was kept waiting during the greater part of a night at the enemy's outposts, but ultimately succeeded in her object.

[2] William Markham, Archbishop of York, whose 'libel on the opposition' was contained in his sermon preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel on Feb. 21, 1777.

P.S. Sir Charles Bunbury declared off from the court on Thursday, and Lord Northington voted in the minority yesterday. These are the *rat*ifications of misfortune.

1823. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Thursday night, Dec. 11, 1777.

I do not write, Madam, to tell you politics; you will hear them better from Lord Ossory: nor indeed have I words to paint the abject impudent poltroonery of the ministers, or the blockish stupidity of the Parliament.

Lord North yesterday declared he should during the recess prepare to lay before the Parliament proposals of peace to be offered to the Americans! *I trust we have force enough to bring forward an accommodation.* They were his very words. Was ever proud insolent nation sunk so low! Burke and Charles Fox told him the administration thought of nothing but keeping their places; and so they will, and the members their pensions, and the nation its infamy. Were I Franklin, I would order the Cabinet Council to come to me at Paris with ropes about their necks, and then kick them back to St. James's.

Well, Madam, as I told Lord Ossory t'other day, I am satisfied,—Old England is safe, that is, America, whither the true English retired under Charles the First:—this is Nova Scotia, and I care not what becomes of it.

I have just been at *Percy*[1]. The four first acts are much better than I expected, and very animated. There are good situations, and several pretty passages, but not much nature. There is a fine speech of the heroine to her father, and a strange sermon against Crusades, that ends with a description of the Saviour, who died for our sins. The last act is very ill-conducted, unnatural, and obscure.

Letter 1823.—[1] A tragedy by Hannah More.

Earl Douglas is a savage ruffian. Earl Percy is converted by the virtue of his mistress, and she is *love and virtue* in the supreme degree. There is a prologue and epilogue about fine ladies and fine gentlemen, and feathers and buckles, and I don't doubt every word of both Mr. Garrick's, for they are commonplace, and written for the upper gallery. It was very moderately performed, but one passage against the *odious Scot* Douglas was loudly applauded, and showed that the mob have no pensions.

Our brave administration have turned out Lord Jersey[2] and Mr. Hopkins[3], which will certainly convince all America and all Europe, that they are *not* afraid; though I saw one of their tools to-day who assured me they are,—nay, he said (and *he* is somebody) that if the Congress insists on the ministry being changed it must be. I do not believe the Congress will do them so much honour; but I answered, 'Sir, if the Congress should make that condition, it will not be from caring about it, but to make the pacification impossible. I do not believe they care much more for the opposition than for the administration; but they must know that the opposition could not, would not, grant terms, that this administration should refuse.'

Adieu, Madam! I am at last not sorry you have no son, and your daughters, I hope, will be married to Americans, and not in this dirty, despicable island!

1824. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Dec. 17, 1777.

There can be nothing more amiable or more just than your Ladyship's reproof to me for forgetting your *sons*[1].

[2] The Earl of Jersey was a Lord of the Bedchamber.

[3] Richard Hopkins, Clerk Comptroller of the Board of Green Cloth.

Letter 1824. — [1] Lady Ossory's sons by her previous marriage; see the last paragraph of the preceding letter.

I could excuse myself more easily to Lord Ossory than to you; and, in truth, my mind is so narrow and contracted by all I have seen and see, that those I love occupy the whole remaining space; like a small map, only the chief rivers are set down, and not all the rivulets. It was this partial humour, and not what you are pleased to dignify with the name of *proper pride*, that made me so cold to the Earl Lord Ossory found with me. I just contrive to keep within the bounds of cool civility to those I do not wish to see. Mr. Beauclerk told me t'other day he wondered I received everybody that came to see me. I told him it was very little inconvenience, for those I was not glad to see found little encouragement to come often.

As I have no new news to send your Ladyship, for Captain Craig has only brought the confirmation of Burgoyne's capitulation, I should have deferred my apology for some days, were I not impatient to mention what interests me much, as it regards your Ladyship and our Lord. I called on Lady Holland last night, and thought she looked ill. I afterwards found Lady Payne at Lady Di's, and Mrs. Dixon, both whom I had seen with Lady Holland. They were both very uneasy about her. She has been blooded four or five times, and it was to be repeated this morning; and Lady Payne told me Dr. Warren is not quite satisfied with her case. Lady Payne wishes much to have her go abroad, but does not think she will be persuaded. In short, I promised to tell Lord Ossory her apprehensions, and I am sure he will be so good as not to take notice of my information, especially as it might alarm his sister herself. She is so delicate, that it is better to be too circumspect than the contrary.

Crawfurd is again confined with the gout, and ought to be closer confined. He has heard that Taaffe has been cured by Buzaglo[2], and sent for the former, who told him fairly

[2] Abraham Buzaglo (d. 1788), a Jew. He first attracted notice as

that Buzaglo had removed his gout in four hours, but said the operation would kill any man less strong. The remedy struck him, and he totally forgot the reasoning; and when I urged his debility, he vowed he had rather die, than have the gout. 'Oh,' said I, 'I shall not contest with you, for people often contradict one till they grow determined upon points, that at first they scarce laid any stress upon; and you shall not kill yourself only to confute me'—but he will have no more patience to be boiled to death, than with the gout; and when he has simmered half an hour, he will despair, and try the next quack he hears of.

You will please to tell me when you would have me to Ampthill. I cannot well be there before the middle of next week, but from that moment I am at your Ladyship's command for what part of the holidays will be most convenient to you, and shall not engage myself anywhere else till you have disposed of me. *Anywhere else* sounds magnificent, but really means nowhere but Park Place. I am too ancient to go about like morrice-dancers, to every house that is open at Christmas; nor but where they are so good as to have indulgence, and let me come away if I feel any menaces of the gout.

1825. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Tuesday morning, Dec. 23, 1777.

I have just received a very good answer to my message; Lady Holland is much better. I will call on her myself before I come to Ampthill, which I propose shall be on Friday or Saturday—but man proposes, and fog disposes. If it is as dark as to-day or last Saturday, I shall not be

an inventor of heating apparatus. He then set up as a gout doctor, professing to cure by muscular exercise only. He advertised extensively, and was considered a quack.

able to find my way. I was forced on Saturday to light a candle at eleven in the morning, in my room forwards, to read the newspapers; and it is not the breadth of a hair lighter this morning. If this Egyptian obscurity does not produce snow, I shall not mind it.

I know nothing, Madam, though we have so many affairs on our hands, that almost every sea and every wind might bring us news of our concerns. It is well we have heads so capacious and hearts so stout, as to hold all these matters, and not mind it, if the world tumbles to pieces about our ears!

I suppose you know Lady Louisa Leveson[1] is to marry Mr. Macdonald.

I have been at another new play, *The Roman Sacrifice*[2]. It is the old story of Junius Brutus, without a tolerable line. I went to see it, as I had never seen Henderson, and thought I could judge him better in a new part; but either the part was so bad, or he wants to copy, that I should not have found out he was at all superior to all the other actors. Upon my word I have not a syllable more to say, and am your Ladyship's, &c.

1826. To Earl Harcourt.

Saturday morning.

It is so impossible for me, my dear Lord, to know what I shall have it in my power to do on Friday, that I believe the most respectful to your Lordship, which I certainly always mean to be, is to excuse myself for Friday next, though waiting on you and Lady Harcourt would be the

Letter 1825. — [1] Lady Louisa Leveson-Gower, eldest daughter of second Earl Gower; m. (Dec. 1777) Archibald Macdonald (1747-1826), third son of Sir Alexander Macdonald, seventh Baronet, of Sleat in Skye; knighted, 1788; cr. a Baronet, 1813; Solicitor-General, 1784; Attorney-General, 1788; Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, 1793-1813.

[2] By William Shirley.

Letter 1826. — Hitherto placed amongst letters of 1778.

most agreeable. The case is that I have been going to Ampthill these three days, but have been delayed by the danger of the poor Bishop of Exeter, of whom I every minute expect the worst news. Should I fortunately hear anything good, I shall go on Monday to Lord Ossory's for a week, as I have promised. If the Bishop should linger, his death may make it improper for me to dine abroad on Friday. Forgive my troubling your Lordship with so many circumstances, since it proves how much I wish to be always at your command, and how much I am afraid of laying you [under] any difficulty by my unavoidable uncertainty. If I am at liberty, I hope at least Lady Harcourt will allow me to pay my duty to her in the evening.

Your Lordship's most devoted,

HOR. WALPOLE.

1827. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Dec. 27, 1777.

THE misfortune has happened, Madam; the poor Bishop died this morning. The Duchess[1] is gone to Windsor to try to bring her sister to town, who insists on staying there till he is buried, and every one of their windows looks on St. George's Chapel! but I will not sadden your Ladyship with the distress I am witness to! It is impossible for me to leave them at present, or my brother. Lady Laura[2], who had lived a great deal with the Bishop, and loved him like a father, is as afflicted as his own children—though they have additional cause to regret him. I have been so taken up with this calamity, that I have not had a moment to call on Lady Holland, of whom I am happy to hear such good accounts. I have not time to add a word more.

LETTER 1827.—[1] The Duchess of Gloucester.
[2] Lady Laura Waldegrave.

1828. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Monday evening, Dec. 29, 1777.

I purpose, with your Ladyship's and Lord Ossory's good leave, to be at Ampthill on Friday, 2nd of next year. Do not stay dinner for me; I seldom get out early in the morning.

As I have seen nothing but my family these three days, I know not what has become of the world. The capture of Mud Island[1] is very improbable, like all ship-news, especially as no account is come since.

I shall call presently on Lady Holland, and I hope to bring you a very good account of her. I have heard that she looks much better. There is to be a gallery at Bedford House for Princess Amelia on New Year's Day. I hope Lady Louisa[2] does not return for it.

I must tell you, Madam, a charming speech of my niece, Lady Maria[3]. A few hours after the Bishop died, the Bishop of Oxford[4] came to my brother where she was. Her aunt, Mrs. Clements, said to her, 'I am afraid you are shocked at seeing the Bishop.' 'No,' replied she, 'not as he is a Bishop: if he had been only Dr. Butler, I should have been shocked.' I assure you she says a thousand things as worthy of the *late* Lord Waldegrave.

1829. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Jan. 4, 1778.

The period of a month is elapsed; and therefore, not to break through an ancient custom which I am not young

Letter 1828.—[1] Mud Island was captured by the English on Nov. 15, 1777.

[2] Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick.

[3] Lady Maria Waldegrave, Horace Walpole's great-niece.

[4] John Butler, D.D. (1717–1802), Bishop of Oxford, 1777–88; Bishop of Hereford, 1788–1802.

enough to be excused violating (though legislators often dispense themselves from observing their own laws), I begin a letter to you, not at all foreseeing with what it is to be filled. The distance of place, and the extreme taciturnity of the Howes, must have taught you a little not to expect events from America every day. Even Burgoyne has left himself nothing to say—till he arrives. We have lived a fortnight on the capture of Mud Island, though it is far from clear that it is yet taken. If, on the contrary, New York should be retaken by the provincials—but stay, I do not know they intend it,—it has a most slender garrison, so has Quebec; but Washington may think it a shorter way of terminating the war by overwhelming the army under Howe—if he can. In truth, I am no judge of what is most for their interest—but the Congress seem to know.

You must not suppose, though I make such short work of it, that it is the *language* here to sit down, and give America for lost. The ministers had, indeed, very near said so, and Lord North was to bring terms for peace after the holidays; *mais nous avons changé tout cela*, and nothing is talked of but raising regiments, and sending another army—I don't know whither, because, supposing a new army can be raised, which is a *postulatum*, it will be a little necessary to know whether we have New York, or Philadelphia, or Quebec; and though, probably, one or two of them—but I really do not know what I say, nor have I found anybody on whose sleeve I pin my faith in these affairs. We have had assertion, and prophecy, and confidence, and all have been brought to shame, and none of them are ashamed; and so I refer you to the chapter of accidents.

The Parliament, when it shall meet, is to go into a great inquiry, which, I conclude, will end in nothing at all, or, rather, not end. The talk of the day is, that France has

signed a treaty with the provincials, and the stocks look pale upon it; but all these rumours only fill up the chinks of time, and will be forgotten when great events happen. By *great events* I mean foreign war and domestic calamity. We are on the high road to both. The present moment is only like the half-hour at the theatre before the play begins: the galleries are riotous, pelt the candle-snuffers, or bawl for the overture; when the curtain is drawn up, nobody thinks but of the tragedy.

We have had a great misfortune in our family: the Bishop of Exeter is dead, who married my brother's eldest daughter. She is left with four children and a very small provision indeed; but Sir Edward has acted nobly, and gives up to her an estate at Windsor of eight hundred a year, and a house in town, and keeps her a coach. He has, indeed, been a most bountiful father always, and has not made his children wait for his death.

Lord Orford has been in a most hopeless way for above three months; but last week, though the weather was severe, he had a furious fit, which the faculty reckon more likely to indicate an interval of sense, than quiet and settled irrationality. I am about him as about the war: I let come what will, and do not pretend to augur.

Jan. 7th.

I have received yours of the 10th of last month. You will have learnt before now that the total defeat of Washington was converted into a total defeat of Burgoyne, and it is very much the opinion of the City that the American war will soon be turned into a French one; but I doubt France will stay till we have not a regiment left in the island, which you know would save a great deal of blood.

Don't trouble your head any longer about Lady Lucy's having a son; they are the happiest that have no children.

We are not content with having lost America; we shall

not have an army to defend England. Why does not Mrs. Anne Pitt return? She would find most people as mad as herself.

1830. To the Earl of Upper Ossory.

January 8, 1777 [1778].

I was very sorry, my dear Lord, that it was too late to write to you last night when I heard the news, that I might immediately make you easy about your friends. It was past eleven when Mrs. Howe, at Lady Hertford's, received a note to tell her that Mud Island was taken *December 2nd*, and that only four men were killed and five wounded. This shows that the former accounts of the capture, and of the slaughter, were totally false. I know nothing more, but conclude the Americans had abandoned the fort, and very probably are gone to New York. The belief of a French war is far from decreasing.

Duke Hamilton[1] most assuredly marries Miss Burrell.

Lady George Germaine was given over yesterday; was rather better at night, but is not so to-day.

I say nothing about myself, for I am ashamed. The severe colds and fogs frighten me, and I doubt will bring the gout whether I stir or not: I have twice thought it actually come; but it uses me like a coquette that will not part with one, though she does not care for anything but the power. The gout, that can make conquests only of the aged, is still more jealous. I had promised myself a most comfortable week at Ampthill, but I find that the few visions I had left must vanish like all the rest! A clock has struck that wakes one from dreams!

Letter 1830.—Misplaced by C. amongst letters of 1777. (See *Notes and Queries*, July 7, 1900.)

[1] Douglas Hamilton (1756–1799), eighth Duke of Hamilton, m. (April 5, 1778) Elizabeth Anne, daughter of Peter Burrell, of Beckenham, Kent, from whom he was divorced in 1794.

P.S. After dinner.

I have now seen the office account. It says Mud Island was taken on the 15th of *November*; so I suppose the note to Mrs. Howe mistook the date of the letters for that of the surrender; but I am sure of what was in the note, for Lady Mary Coke read it twice with all her importance of accent. The Americans abandoned the fort[2] the night of the attack, leaving all their cannon and stores, and having lost, says the office, four hundred men. Lord Cornwallis, on the 10th, having passed the Delaware, and being joined by Sir T. Wilson[3] with the troops from New York, attacked Red Bank[4], which the provincials abandoned too, and left their cannon and stores; so, if you believe authority, they do nothing but supply the King's troops. Sir W. Howe intended to march immediately to Washington, who was at White Marsh[5]; but as his letters are dated *December* 1st, and he had taken the island on the 15th, his *immediately* had lasted a fortnight.

I have just received Lady Ossory's, but have not time to answer it.

1831. To the Rev. William Mason.

Arlington Street, Jan. 17, 1778.

I have not written to you since you went, as I had nothing to tell you; and I write improperly now, when one is probably at the eve of having something to say, but the fish I have to fry is of another kind. Can it be true that you have an opera coming on the stage, and that you never mentioned it to me? Had I torn Orpheus piecemeal,

[2] On Mud Island.

[3] Sir Thomas Spencer Wilson, sixth Baronet (d. 1798), of Charlton, Kent, afterwards a Lieutenant-General.

[4] In New Jersey, on Navasink Bay, taken possession of by the English on Nov. 17, 1777.

[5] Fourteen miles from Philadelphia. Howe decided that Washington's camp was inaccessible, and retired into winter quarters at Philadelphia.

I could not be more unworthy of musical communication. Am I so untunable that I must not hear airs unless I can sing them? Yes, you have written an opera, and it is called *Sappho*, and I suppose Mrs. Montagu is to be first woman. Lord Strafford is my authority; and yet I can scarce think you would have been so basely unfriendly; if you have, I wish your celestinette may be broken about your ears, or that Lady Rockingham may desire a rehearsal at her own house in the morning, and make the poet and the whole orchestra wait till nine at night.

Knapton[1] is dying, but the promise to Sandby[2] is superseded, *de par le Roy*, because it dates from the Duke of Grafton.

General Howe has been to take another look at Washington, and passed eldest[3] again. The town of Froome, concluding *Burgoyne* was a Frenchman by his name, made great rejoicings on his being taken prisoner.

I heard last night that Voltaire is dead[4]; now one may buy his works safely, as he cannot write them over and over again.

You shall not hear a word more from me till you clear yourself about the opera. Should it prove true, I shall never believe a syllable more about your idleness, nay, shall conclude that everything that appears is yours, and I am sure that will be full vengeance.

P.S. Pray did you write *The Roman Sacrifice*, the last new tragedy? It was detestable.

LETTER 1831.—[1] George Knapton, Keeper of the King's pictures. He died in Dec. 1778.

[2] Paul Sandby.

[3] An allusion to Howe's failure to take any decisive action. The term is borrowed from the game of loo:—'He who is eldest Hand hath the Privilege of passing by the Benefit thereof, that is, he hath the Advantage of hearing what every one will say, and, at last, may play, or not play, according as he finds his Game good or bad. If the Eldest says he passes, the rest may chuse whether they will play, or no.' (*Compleat Gamester*, fifth edition, 1734, pt. ii. p. 18, under *Lue*.)

[4] A false report.

1832. To the Rev. William Mason.

Jan. 24, 1778.

I received your act[1] late last night, and though I have run through it but once, I am impatient not only to pardon you, but thank you. I can forgive you anything but idleness; and music, which your words always are, has charms to soothe even me. The language is so harmonious, that I think as I did of Dryden's *Ode*, that it will be more melodious unset than when adapted. Yet if you can rival Dryden, Giardini cannot paragon Handel. I am, I know, a most poor judge of musical composition, yet may not I ask if Giardini possesses either force or simplicity? Your act is classic Athenian: shall it be subdi-di-di-vi-vi-vi-ded into modern Italian? but it is too late to ask that question.

I shall now mention a very few criticisms.

The language is so sweet, that my soul that loves chiaroscuro as a contrast, at least wants a little more sombre, and the place I would allot for it is Sappho's speech after the vision. The parts of Metastasio (I do not compare you down to him) that please me most are his long soliloquies of accompanied recitative in last acts; they give scope to the poet, the passions, the actress, and the composer. I would not have Sappho determine at once, but struggle with love, fear, hope, despair; and when she doubts obeying the god, thunder may mark his anger, and decide her; for she obeys a dream too suddenly, though classic times may justify her more than a modern would be justified.

As you are sublime in choruses, why have you only one in an opera,—in a Greek opera? They are simple, and yet give variety; sure a hymeneal chorus is necessary.

Letter 1832.—[1] An act of Mason's lyrical drama *Sappho*, first printed in 1797.

I have an objection, which is odd, even to the parts I have *not* seen, but you hint (by Sappho in her female dress) at her being disguised as a man in a former act. Will not *that* be a little too characteristic, and give a handle to buffoonery in the learned part of the mob?

I have few verbal criticisms to make, though I could commend a thousand passages, particularly the two lines on Alpheus, and the exquisite first air. I am not quite pleased with *down, down, down,* as a little too artificial, and then *down* should not come in the very next line, and in a sense that is the very opposite to the former sense, and shows we express a precipitate fall and the softness of repose by the same sound.

I do not quite approve so forced an expression as *downcast tenderness,* and I cavil at

> I *feel* that full, that heart*felt* tenderness
> That blesses those who never *felt* distress,

and would rather change *heartfelt,* which has a German sound. In the second line *felt* is most sonorous.

I have literally but one more qualm. When Sappho dedicates her lyre, she says it is *far sweeter than the harp.* This methinks is too nice a distinction for a person in her situation to make, and fitter for a commentator's note than a woman on the point of destroying herself. Yes, I see another, that I have just cast my eyes on: Sappho must not utter the word *requiem*; in short, Metastasio may use such an anachronism, but Musæus must not, shall not.

I shall send the act and the letter to Giardini, as you order, though with regret I own: for I doubt his music will not have that majestic greatness and distinctiveness that are necessary to let the words be understood. Add that our singers want more to be taught to articulate than to sing. All the women jabber; and bad as his taste was, Beard did more justice to sense than any of our performers;

for though he laid a stress on every syllable, yet at least the audience, such as were capable, could suppose the right accents. In short, I wish your opera could be accompanied only by the lyre and the tibia.

There is no new event. The Parliament has done little or nothing, as they wait for Lord George to lead up the Blues. I have no time for details, and, in truth, I am thinking more of *Sappho* than of the nation, and am happy when I can amuse myself with reading anything but politics, which I am sure nobody will ever read after the day they are published; but indeed who does write what is readable? I have got two more volumes of Shenstone's *Correspondence*, and they are like all the rest, insipidity itself. Home's *Alfred* died three days old; *The Battle of Hastings*[2] is to appear this evening; the child of as feeble a parent. Garrick has been *reading* plays at Althorp *à la* Texier, and been adored as usual; yet I do not believe he succeeded half so well in the women. He goes on writing his wretched epilogues too, for he cannot sit down with the *strulbruggism* that he had the sense to take up.

There is a Mr. Potter[3] too, I don't know who, that has published a translation of Æschylus, and as far as I have looked is a good poet. I am sure he has taste, for in his preface he speaks like an initiate of *Elfrida* and *Caractacus*. I am delighted with *Prometheus*, though I do not approve of a mad cow for first woman.

1833. To Earl Harcourt.

I RETURN your Lordship Mrs. Macaulay's letter with many thanks. I need not say how much I agree with her in most

[2] By Richard Cumberland.

[3] Rev. Robert Potter (1721–1806), at this time master of a school at Scarning in Norfolk.

LETTER 1833. — Misplaced by C. amongst letters of Oct. 1778. (See *Notes and Queries*, Nov. 3, 1900.)

topics; but I smiled at her account of the provisions in France, and their *bad* cookery.

I accept always with great pleasure your Lordship's invitations; and certainly have no exceptions to the company specified. Though you are so very good as to name them, I think I may trust to never meeting at Harcourt House anybody that would be very disagreeable to me, much less that could balance the honour and pleasure of waiting on your Lordship and Lady Harcourt. I remember that Lady Townshend, in 1746, said she did not dare to dine anywhere, for fear of meeting with rebel pies. Thank God! we are in no danger *now* of such dishes. Indeed your Lordship and I have been more likely to be the ingredients than the guests at such banquets! Poor Lord Pigot[1]! He *has dined* with a Scotchman[2]!

H. W.

1834. To the Rev. William Mason.

Arlington Street, Feb. 4, 1778.

I shall be sorry if you depend on me for your winter provision of news; I know so little, and the papers so much, that I could only repeat their information with not half their eloquence. All last week I was confined with a great cold which I thought it impossible for me to catch, not having had a genuine one these five or six years; I mean, not more than what I call a cold when I want an

[1] The confirmation of the news of Lord Pigot's death in captivity near Fort St. George reached England on Jan. 31, 1778.

[2] Colonel Stuart, second in command of the forces in Madras. 'On the 24th of August, 1776, the Colonel passed the greater part of the day in company or in business with Lord Pigot; he both breakfasted and dined with him as his familiar friend, and was driving in the carriage with him when, according to the Colonel's previous orders, the carriage was surrounded and stopped by troops. His Lordship was then informed that he was their prisoner.' (Stanhope, *History of England*, ed. 1853–4, vol. vii. p. 269.)

excuse for not doing what I have not a mind to do; I was blooded in spite of the gout's teeth, and yet am well again.

I hear you have finished a third book of the *Garden*; thank the Muses you seldom do anything when you have nothing to do. It seems I am to learn your deeds from second and third hands.

As I suppose you care more about authors than politicians, I shall begin with the former. *The Battle of Hastings*—or rather one side of it, for not a Norman appears—has been acted. I have not seen it; the accounts are a little like a charade, for they say the first part makes one cry, the latter laugh, and the whole sleep. It will soon be gathered in due chronologic order to its predecessor *Alfred*.

I forgot till I had filled my sheet to answer your question about Lord Pigot[1], and then it was not worth while to tap a new page, as the account was contradicted. It is now confirmed. I know no more than you see in the newspapers, and thence you will collect that there has been more than meets the ear.

The enigma of the day, as he has oft been, is Lord Chatham. He has quarrelled with General Rockingham on the question of independence, and in a manner declared off; yet he is expected to-day in the House of Lords to anathematize the new levies[2]. There is much talk too of his coming into place, which I doubt; everybody must have discovered that his crutch is no magic wand, and if the lame leads the blind it is not the way of shunning a ditch. Charles Fox has tumbled old Saturn from the throne of oratory, and if he has not all the dazzling lustre, has much

LETTER 1834.—[1] Mason, in one of his letters, referred to the suggestions of foul play in connection with Lord Pigot's death, which were freely made at this time.

[2] A scheme was on foot to raise regiments without previously obtaining the consent of Parliament.

more of the solid materials. They say nothing ever excelled his oration against the *unfortunate minister*[3], who was truly unfortunate that day, for had Lord George been present, the thunder had fallen on him. Charles's speech on Monday[4] was as marvellous for method and memory, and was really unanswerable, for not one of the ministers knew what to say, and so said nothing, and that silence cost them many votes. In short, the minority amounted to above an hundred and sixty, in which were several Tories. It is supposed the inquiries will be put to a violent death, which will be very weak, for the people are contented with whatever is discussed and voted, but grow impatient when their ears are stopped by force.

The new levies are like Glendower's: he can stamp and call spirits from the vasty deep; but they don't come, consequently they will not go. I fancy the American war is pretty near an end—I mean as to attempting more than keeping what remains. I don't think there will be a French war *yet*, unless we chance to go together by the ears at sea. However, it hangs by a thread.

Having now given you the quintessence of my intelligence, you see it would not have made one more letter than it does. I shall reserve a vacuum for what may pass to-day in the Lords; but I have very rarely known a much-expected debate answer. Chance is as much mistress of orators as of generals; and the prepared engagements of both frequently turn out like Sir W. Howe's two *surveys* of Washington's army.

[3] 'Charles Fox, in an admirable speech, attacked Lord North on having called himself *an unfortunate minister*, and proved that all the disgraces had happened by ignorance, blunders, and misconduct, not by misfortune. Lord North answered with some humour; and as Fox had accused him of idleness and listening to flatterers, he said he passed a great deal of time in that House, where he could not be idle, and it was plain was not *flattered*.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. pp. 183-4.)

[4] Feb. 2, 1778, when both Houses went upon the inquiry into the state of the nation.

5th.

Lord Chatham did not appear: they say he has the gout, but I suppose not so bad but he could hobble to the end of the Park[5] if he was much entreated. I have heard of nothing particular that passed in either House, but have seen nobody that was in either; in good truth I am little curious about debates. The ruin has gone a great deal too far to make Parliament of any consequence; speakers may amuse themselves with filling up the interstices of events, but when a house is falling, does one care who painted the staircase? Yes, Lord Chatham does. Because he once raised the building a story higher, he thinks he could do as much when the foundations have given way. Adieu! I long to see your *Garden*. I am forced to read the newspapers, or my eyes would starve, yet it is feeding them with offals.

1835. To the Earl of Strafford.

My dear Lord,

I am always as proud as happy in having the honour of waiting on your Lordship, as I will on Saturday, and as I should much oftener in a morning if I went out—but I may tell you the truth, as you will not laugh at me. I am not young enough to have spirits for the whole day, and if I did not stay at home in a morning, I should not be able to go through the evening with any satisfaction, and sup out, as I must do, if I will live with some of those I am most connected with. When one grows so old as I do one must be an economist of one's spirits as well as money, or go off like the fashionable people of the age.

Your Lordship's most truly devoted

Feb. 4th, 1778. H. Walpole.

[5] To the Queen's House.

Letter 1835.—Not in C.; printed from original in British Museum.

1836. To Sir Horace Mann.

Feb. 6, 1778.

It is odd, that in the heat of a Parliamentary campaign, enlivened by a civil war, I should have nothing particular to tell you. The troops of the latter are gone into winter quarters. The others are in the field, and skirmish every day. If any of the generals are wounded, they do not own it. Some of the forces of the larger army have deserted to the enemy; and on Monday the numbers of the opposition mounted to an hundred and sixty odd. On the other hand, it is commonly believed that the old general of the minority, Lord Chatham, is to command the King's forces. It is certain that there is a great coolness between him and General Rockingham, but I think that disagreement so much more beneficial to the court; and I see so little advantage to be acquired by gaining an old commander without soldiers, so fractious, so unsettled, and so impracticable, that I shall wonder much if he is invited to take the lead. It might add to the present distractions, and could cure none.

As my opinions do not always agree with the majority anywhere, it is not mine that we are on the brink of a French war. It is needless to repeat my reasons; I have told you them before.

The Duke of Gloucester has again been out of order; but not near so ill, I think, as some thought, or as I have seen him. He still coughs a good deal. His constitution is always alarming, and one must not trust too much to the wonderful recoveries he has had; yet perhaps frequent advertisements are not contrary, lest his youth and courage should make him presume too much.

These paragraphs are the quintessence of my letter, and

it ought to end here, were it a decent quantity: yet why should one write more than what one has to say? A letter tells you I am not negligent, though perhaps I grow lazy. I never was good at detailing. The event of things is all I mind; which I own does not help conversation. I leave you ignorant of nothing decisive. The present inquiries in Parliament into the conduct of the war I look on as a tale of a tub. The ministers give themselves up to be teased, more to amuse their antagonists than inform them; and the latter are pleased with making speeches. But can all this make peace, or carry on the war? Neither: but the inability of making either will produce other-guess events, and they *will* be serious.

These are my politics, which I adopt from no side, and preach to nobody. They are of not much use even to myself; for I am not of an age to trouble myself about what is to happen. When one talks of the times, one must think something; and, *isolé* as I am, it is more natural to look at the affairs of nations than at the feathers and fashions of the young, though perhaps as grave a subject. I would neither be boyish nor morose. Age, without any study on my part, has given me great indifference, and yet has been so good as to leave me spirits enough to be tranquil and to amuse myself. It is enough, not to *wish* to live or die.

1837. To the Rev. William Mason.

Arlington Street, Feb. 12, 1778.

I have received two letters from you, one of the 6th, and another of the 8th, but not the long one you mention; for the first was but of twenty-five lines, and the latter of twenty-three, neither of which I should think a long one from anybody from whom I liked to hear at all, much less

shall you pretend that one page is to pass for length; yet I conclude you have written none that I have not received. However, I answer you immediately, that you may ascertain the fact, and I wish for the future you would keep the dates of the letters you do write, long or short.

I will not talk now of the story[1] you mention, which I not only know, but remember happening. *Basta!* there will be a time.

I am dismally afraid I shall not be able to go to *Elfrida* on Saturday. My cold, that I thought gone, is worse, with the addition of a sore throat. I have not been out of my doors these two days, and as putrid sore throats are very rife, of which one of Lord Bute's daughters[2] is dead, I am afraid of ripening mine to one. I am a little sorry you bestow your words not only on folk that cannot act, but on voices that cannot articulate. If *Sappho* is to be sung, I wish it were by Italians, for from the pains they take to speak English, they pronounce more distinctly than our natives.

I sent your act to Giardini, and wish he may make it discourse most eloquent music. His violin to be sure will make a long soliloquy; but though I like Handel, I am not bigoted. I thought Dryden's *Ode* more harmonious before he set it than after, yet he had expression; and I prefer Charles Fox's 'native wood notes' to Burke's feigned

Letter 1837.—[1] The story occurs in Mason's letter of Feb. 8, 1778 (see *Correspondence of Walpole and Mason*, vol. i. p. 333, where also Horace Walpole states in a note that it relates to Lord Mansfield). It is as follows:—'In 1745, when the rebels were at Derby, and subscriptions were going on in London, a certain (then) barrister at Lincoln's Inn was called upon by a parish officer for his name, &c. He was treated as a man should be that solicits an illegal unconstitutional subscription. The rebels retreated from Derby. The barrister flew immediately to the parish officer's house to put down his name; the P. O. was from home, had locked up the book; a blacksmith was called for to break open the bureau, and the name was inserted! This parish officer lived either in Long Acre, or Great Queen Street. This I had from good authority two years ago, and was told the fact might yet be authenticated.'

[2] Lady Augusta Corbett, fourth daughter of Lord Bute.

voice, though it goes to the highest pitch of the gamut of wit.

Apropos, his last Friday's parody of Burgoyne's talk with the Indians was the *chef-d'œuvre* of wit, humour, and just satire, and almost suffocated Lord North himself with laughter; as his pathetic description of the barbarities of the Cis-atlantic army

Drew iron tears down Barré's cheek.

I wish I could give you an idea of that superlative oration. He was pressed to print it, but says he has not time during the session. How cold, how inadequate will be my fragment of a sketch from second, third, and thousandth hands; yet I must send you a bit of a daub with probably even the epithets wrong or misplaced, though each was picturesque. Well, though I can neither draw nor colour, *invenies etiam disjecta membra.* Hurlothrumbo exhorted seventeen Indian nations, who so far from understanding the Hurlothrumbic dialect, are probably almost as ignorant of English; he exhorted them by the dictates of *our* holy religion, and by their reverence for *our* constitution, to repair to his Majesty's standard. 'Where was that?' said Burke: 'on board Lord Dunmore's ship;'[3]—and he exhorted them (I suppose by the same divine and human laws) not to touch the hair of the head of man, woman, or child, while living, though he was willing to deal with them for scalps of the dead, being a nice and distinguished judge between the scalp taken from a dead person and the head of a person that dies of being scalped. 'Let us state this Christian exhortation and Christian injunction,' said Burke, 'by a more family picture. Suppose there was a riot on Tower Hill, what would the keeper of his Majesty's lions do? would he not fling open the dens of the wild beasts, and then address them thus?—

[3] See note on letter to Mason of Dec. 21, 1776.

"My gentle lions, my humane bears, my sentimental wolves, my tender-hearted hyenas, go forth; but I exhort ye, as ye are Christians and members of a civilized society, to take care not to hurt man, woman, or child, &c., &c."' Barré's codicil was to threaten to paste on churches this memorable talk under the injunctions of the bishops for a fast. Governor Johnstone said he rejoiced there were no strangers in the gallery, as Burke's speech would have excited them to tear the ministers to pieces as they went out of the House; the ministers are much more afraid of losing their places. Eloquence, like music, is too much improved in our days to have any of their old effects on the passions of a large audience.

Voilà a truly long letter. I leave the application to your conscience.

1838. To the Rev. William Mason.

Feb. 18, 1778.

I have two small morsels of news to tell you, and do not know which you will choose to hear first. As you cannot choose without knowing, it would be vain to wait for your answer, especially as I cannot state them without preferring one to the other. Iricisms, it is true, are not out of fashion. *Nos seigneurs* the Peers will not vote truisms to be true, lest they should betray the weakness of the nation, though those truisms, and the reason for not asserting them, are given in every newspaper, which newspapers are read in every coffee-house in Paris. *Ergo* their Lordships suppose that France supposes herself to know nothing but what appears in the votes.

As a loyal subject and freeman of Parnassus, I must believe that you interest yourself more in Heliconian affairs than in the politics of the *late* empire of Great Britain.

I therefore announce to you the arrival of Voltaire at Paris. Yes; there he is. Probably *recalled from exile to raise a regiment of infidels for the defence of holy Church.*

The other event would not be worth mentioning, but for its novelty. In that light, to be sure, no parallel instance is to be found in ancient or modern history, whether Ammonite, Jewish, Chaldean, Egyptian, Chinese, Greek, Roman, Constantinopolitan, Frank, French, British, Saxon, Pict, Ossianite, Mogul, Indian, or English (all which I have examined carefully this morning to no purpose), nay, in the tales of the fairies, in which I am still more deeply versed, I find nothing similar. You perhaps, who have all ecclesiastical history at your fingers' ends, may recollect something approaching to the transaction of *yesterday the 17th of February*, a day of confession and humiliation, that will be remembered as long as the name of England exists. Yesterday, Feb. 17, did the whole administration, by the mouth of their spokesman, Lord North—no, no, not resign; on the contrary, try to keep their places by a full and ample confession of all their faults, and by a still more extraordinary act,—by doing full justice both to America and to the opposition,—by allowing that the former are no cowards nor conquerable,—that they are no rebels, for the new Commissioners are to treat with the Congress or anybody, and, by asking pardon by effects, i. e. the cancelling all offensive acts, and by acknowledging the independence of the thirteen provinces, not *verbally* yet *virtually*. These were Lord North's words. To the opposition full justice is done; for if the administration has been in the wrong from beginning to end, their opponents must have been a little in the right.

The faults of the administration, according to their own calculation, are *two*: one of being misinformed, the other of persisting in a mere point of honour. Some will perhaps think they have been guilty of two more;—the destruction

of twenty-four thousand lives on their own side, and Lord knows how many thousands on t'other, with the burning of towns, desolation of the country, and the expense of above thirty millions of money; the second consists of two parts —rejection of all proposals of accommodation offered by the opposition, and the delay of offering terms themselves till they knew it was too late; for Lord North was asked if he did not know that the treaty[1] between the Americans and France is signed? He would not answer till Sir George Saville hallooed out, 'An answer, an answer, an answer!' His Lordship then rose, could not deny the fact, but said he did not know it *officially*; that is, I suppose, it does not stand on the votes of the Parliament at Paris.

What shall I say more? though this is not half of that ignominious seventeenth of February. The measure passed *nemine contradicente*. The Tories gulped their shame, the rest *pocketed*. *Note*. The opposition proved an attempt at peace, though a hopeless one. Charles Fox congratulated himself on having converted Lord North. The papers will tell you the rest. If anything could deepen this recantation of wilful criminality, it is that it was extorted at last by the urgency of the moment; in short, to prevent this pretended spirit of pacification from being anticipated by France's notification of her alliance with the American States to all Europe;—what if by a declaration of war! Her troops are in full march to the coast, the Duc de Lauzun recalled hence and ordered to be in France by the 26th. How one blushes to be an Englishman! to be a countryman of the majority! I have no comfort but that I am not a Scot.

A night's rest has not dissipated the astonishment of mankind. Everybody that comes in stares, and cannot

LETTER 1838. — [1] A commercial treaty signed at Paris on Feb. 6, 1778, by Franklin, Lee, and Deane on the part of America and by Gérard, Secretary of the King's Council, on the part of France.

express himself. Who can at once reconcile a supplication of alliance with the high and mighty States of America, with a total improbability of obtaining it? and the faintest hope of peace, with a prospect of a war with France? How, an acknowledgement of independence, with a pretension of supplies, or a suspension of the war for a year and a half, with any intention of renewing it, when the Americans shall have had time to settle their government and recruit? but who *can* digest all the contradictions into which the Government plunges every day?

Who can believe what I have read in the papers to-day? —that one Hutton[2], a Moravian, has been dispatched to Paris to fling himself at Dr. Franklin's feet and sue for forgiveness? it is said that the man fell on the Doctor's neck with tears, and implored peace. What triumph on one side! what humiliation on the other! Will princes still listen to those vile flatterers who fascinate them with visions of empire, that terminate in such mortifications? for the philosopher replied, 'It is too late.'

One cannot rein one's pen at such a moment: it runs away with moralities; but I will stifle commonplace reflections. Shall I not appear a trifler if I can mix anything else with such thoughts? yet having crossed over into a fourth page, I will fill up the remainder with two bagatelles; one was a story related in the House of Commons. Somebody passing along the road in Scotland, heard great outcries, and lamentation, and complaints of violence. He stopped to inquire the cause; another person replied, 'Oh, they are only making volunteers,' i.e. pressing volunteers.

I have waded through *Alfred*[3]. The author says it has been objected that he has tamed a legislator into a lover in a hovel, but he pleads that Alfred had probably been in love. The same excuse would apologize for representing

[2] James Hutton (1715–1795).

[3] A tragedy by John Home.

the Duke of Marlborough, not as a hero, but slabbering in his dotage. In the play itself I found this line, and have written in the title-page as a motto,

I shall surprise you much; my name is Alfred;

mine is

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

P.S. Pray tell me you receive this.

1839. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Feb. 18, 1778.

I do not know how to word the following letter; how to gain credit with you! How shall I intimate to you, that you must lower your topsails, waive your imperial dignity, and strike to the colours of the thirteen United Provinces of America? Do not tremble, and imagine that Washington has defeated General Howe, and driven him out of Philadelphia; or that Gates has taken another army; or that Portsmouth is invested by an American fleet. No: no military *new* event has occasioned this revolution. The sacrifice has been made on the altar of peace. Stop again: peace is not made, it is only implored,—and, I fear, only on this side of the Atlantic. In short, yesterday, *February* 17th, a most memorable era, Lord North opened his conciliatory plan,—no partial, no collusive one. In as few words as I can use, it solicits peace with the States of America: it haggles on no terms; it acknowledges the Congress, or anybody that pleases to treat; it confesses errors, misinformation, ill-success, and impossibility of conquest; it disclaims taxation, desires commerce, hopes for assistance, allows the independence of America, not verbally, yet virtually, and suspends hostilities till June

1779. It does a little more: not *verbally*, but *virtually*, it confesses that the opposition have been in the right from the beginning to the end.

The warmest American cannot deny but these gracious condescensions are ample enough to content that whole continent; and yet, my friend, such accommodating facility had one defect,—it came too late. The treaty between the high and mighty States and France is signed; and instead of peace, we must expect war with the high allies. The French army is come to the coast, and their officers here are recalled.

The House of Commons embraced the plan, and voted it, *nemine contradicente*. It is to pass both Houses with a rapidity that will do everything but overtake time past. All the world is in astonishment. As my letter will not set out till the day after to-morrow, I shall have time to tell you better what is thought of this amazing step.

Feb. 20.

In sooth I cannot tell you what is thought. Nobody knows what to think. To leap at once from an obstinacy of four years to a total concession of everything; to stoop so low, without hopes of being forgiven—who can understand such a transformation? I must leave you in all your wonderment; for the cloud is not dispersed. When it shall be, I doubt it will discover no serene prospect! All that remains certain is, that America is not only lost but given up. We must no longer give ourselves Continental airs! I fear even our trident will find it has lost a considerable prong.

I have lived long, but never saw such a day as last Tuesday! From the first, I augured ill of this American war; yet do not suppose that I boast of my penetration. Far was I from expecting such a conclusion! Conclusion!

—*y sommes-nous?* Acts of Parliament have made a war, but cannot repeal one. They have provoked—not terrified; and Washington and Gates have respected the Speaker's mace no more than Oliver Cromwell did.

You shall hear as events arise. I disclaim all sagacity, and pretend to no foresight. It is not an Englishman's talent. Even the second sight of the Scots has proved a little purblind.

You have heard that Voltaire is actually at Paris? Perhaps soon you will learn French news earlier than I can.

What scenes my letters to you have touched on for eight-and-thirty years! I arrived here at the eve of the termination of my father's happy reign. The Rebellion, as he foresaw, followed; and much disgrace. Another war ensued, with new disgraces. And then broke forth Lord Chatham's sun; and all was glory and extensive empire. Nor tranquillity nor triumph are our lot now! The womb of time is not with child of a mouse,—but adieu! I shall probably write again before you have digested half the meditations this letter will have conjured up.

1840. To the Rev. William Mason.

Arlington Street, March 4, 1778.

It is not from having anything new to tell you that I write you a few lines, but to ask how I may send you half a dozen more *Gazettes Littéraires*, for I conclude your Varelsts[1] are in town. There is no hurry about them; they will always be equally new to you, and not be much so neither. You will find in them the following pretty riddle, which I had seen before:

Letter 1840.—[1] The family of Harry Verelst (d. 1785), ex-Governor of Bengal, who had purchased Aston Hall, near Sheffield, from Lord Holdernesse, and was in consequence a neighbour of Mason.

Eloigné de l'objet que j'aime,
Lui seul calme mon ennui ;
Il est plus beau que l'amour même,
Mais elle est plus belle que lui.

The word is a *portrait*, and is rather too enigmatic, for one must know the solution, to find any sense in *elle*. I have translated it, but as we have no genders it is impossible to render *lui* and *elle* ; my imitation perhaps makes it too clear :

From the dear object of my dreams
Remov'd, I still that object see
As fair as love itself it seems :
Yet she is fairer still than he.

I wish you would try it ; you will have better success. I have made another enigma on the same subject, but cannot tell whether it is good or bad, for how can one tell whether a riddle is difficult to guess, when one knows the subject beforehand ? but do not I lay you under the same difficulty, *le voici* !

I counterfeit all bodies, yet have none.
Bodies give shadows, shadows give me one
Loved for another's sake ; that person yet
Is my chief enemy whene'er we meet ;
Thinks me too old, though blest with endless youth,
And like a monarch hates my speaking truth.

The two middle verses are very bad, I know.

I agree with you ; there is no harm in Mrs. *Elfrida* Hartley's pregnancy. Your drama[2] could not be well represented by the set at Covent Garden ; not that the union of the two companies will make one good, yet will be a better than the worse half. However, I doubt whether the old saying will prove true in your case, that *ce qui est différé n'est pas perdu*. My reason I gave six weeks ago to

[2] *Elfrida*, a dramatic poem by Mason.

Le Texier. He was consulting me whether I thought it would be advantageous for him to take the Opera House on the present plan (on which the other managers had outbidden him): I replied, 'Oui, tant qu'il y ait de l'Angleterre.'

The two conciliatory bills are so very yielding, that nothing but the immediate dread of a French war, or the impossibility of raising money to maintain the armies and fleets in America, could have reconciled the court to such vast concessions, if they are sincere in the desire of treating, which, notwithstanding wiser men than I believe them, I doubt. I can see obvious reasons for seeming to treat: I hear none to persuade me that the Americans will treat. Lord Carlisle is named one of the Commissioners, and is very fit to make a treaty that will not be made.

Voltaire came to Paris without leave, but they say has received an indulgent promise from Monsr. de Maurepas that he shall not be molested. His chief object was to get a new play acted, which he calls *Irène*; it was *Alexis Comnène*, but the latter word sounded too harsh. He has half dispatched himself with reading this piece to the actors, and thinks of nothing else except of being received by the King and Queen, which Madame du Deffand, who has made him two visits, thinks he will not obtain. I should like to have been present at this interview of the two only surviving lilies of the *siècle de Louis Quatorze*; yet he is more occupied with the dandelions of the present age.

I am very thankful for the extract Mr. Burgh[3] gave himself the trouble to send me, and am satisfied. Mrs. Delany had heard of and insisted on seeing the tragedy. I knew how it would shock her devout delicacy. She

[3] William Burgh (1741–1808), an Irishman, and owner of estates in that country, who lived in York. Burgh and Mason had political sympathies. The former edited an edition of Mason's *English Garden* in 1783.

returned it with compliments, but was sorry the subject would condemn it to oblivion—perhaps so; and its more intrinsic demerits, but I do not think being acted will save many of its contemporaries! I am impatient to see your sermon[4]. Did you observe a passage in the Fast Service that has diverted people much, as it came out just after the *nemine contradicente* on the pacific bills? 'Then all the people shall say *after the minister*, Turn us, O Lord, and so shall we be turned.'

I am tempted to sign my name in French, for the pleasure of quoting the following lines from Voltaire's *Indiscret*, the ridiculous parts of which suit me exactly:

TRASIMON.

le vieux Seigneur Horace
M'a prié,—

DAMIS.

Voilà bien de quoi je m'embarrasse.
Horace est un vieux fou, plutôt qu'un vieux seigneur,
Tout chamarré d'orgueil, pétri d'un faux honneur,
Assez bas à la cour, important à la ville
Et non moins ignorant qu'il veut paroître habile.

HORACE.

1841. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, March 5, 1778.

Your letter, my dear Sir, which I received two days ago, is dated the 7th of last month; and you there speak with great distrust of seeing Lady Lucy again. I fear your forebodings were too well founded; for it is said here that she is actually dead[1]. I had heard so ten days ago, but flattered myself that it was not true. Now I see it

[4] A sermon preached by Mason before the Archbishop of York on the occasion of the General Fast, observed on Feb. 27, 1778.

LETTER 1841.—[1] Lady Lucy Mann died in Italy on the 7th of January. *Walpole.*

mentioned in the papers. As you only just knew her enough to love and lament her, I am sorry you ever did see her! Your nephew will feel the loss of so amiable a woman; and yet it is better for him that it is over; as he was only witness to her decay, and perpetually tortured with fears and doubts. His behaviour is exceedingly honourable to him, and discovers a true *Mann's* heart,—unluckily, to make that expression just, it is necessary to double the *n*. I have talked to you philosophically on the vanity of being attached to the continuation of families; yet it is so natural, and I am so susceptible of that vanity, that I look forward to your nephew's marrying again, and having an heir to Linton.

There is another of your name dead, but who, as far as I can find, was not your relation; yet I imagine he was, as he is dead in my brother's and my office, to which he was probably recommended by your father; for the person, John Mann, was very old. His death makes it necessary for us to send you the enclosed paper, which you will be so good as to sign and return as soon as you can, that we may make the necessary succession. I have persuaded Sir Edward to consent that all the clerks shall rise by seniority, unless signally unworthy; it is an encouragement to their zeal; and surely they who do all the business for us, ought to enjoy the fruits of their labours by being preferred, and having nobody put over their heads.

You will have been impatient for the consequences of Lord North's conciliatory plan. The substantial consequence cannot, you are sensible, be known till the Commissioners[2] arrive in America, and return the answer of the Congress; unless their departure is anticipated by some strong declaration of France in their favour, and

[2] The Earl of Carlisle, Governor Johnstone, and William Eden (afterwards Lord Auckland).

which would render a treaty hopeless: many expect such a notification immediately. I am grown such a sceptic, that I believe nothing but *facts past.* The bills meet no obstruction in the House of Commons. They are to-day before the Lords; where I suppose they will experience comments rather than impediments. The intended pacification is not very popular, yet at most produces low murmurs. The nation has leaped from outrageous war to a most humiliating supplication for peace, with as little emotion as one passes in an ague from a shivering fit to a burning one; though I think in the inverted order, for I never had an ague. Methinks the patient's being so little affected by the sudden transition looks as if its constitution had contracted the insensibility of dotage. Every week may produce an era; yet I think nothing very important will happen yet. France has patience in one sense of the word, and we in another; and therefore we shall *bear* as long as they *forbear.* They best know what term they have set to their inactivity; my whole wisdom consists in abstaining from conjectures. Penetration is a fine thing; a genius now and then looks into futurity: but all I know is, that I have no such talent, nor believe much in those that pretend to it. My old face, like the one of Janus, only looks back; the young one may look forward to what will belong to it, and youth is apt to think it sees far: but age is as often mistaken, when it takes its experience for spectacles; they magnify the dim eye that looks through them, more than the objects they look to.

I will certainly mention you at our little court, when they return to town. At present they are gone to the Duke's lodge[3] in the New Forest for change of air. Indeed, it seems very difficult for his Royal Highness to find a situation that suits him. Heats destroy him, and damps

[3] The Duke of Gloucester was Warden of the New Forest.

are as bad. He caught cold above a month ago, had a violent cough, and the asthma frightfully since. It is a terrifying disorder to see; yet I am much easier when he suffers under it, than when the humour falls on his bowels. If he does not mend in the Forest, they will make a voyage to Bourdeaux for some weeks for the benefit of the sea-air, and return when the great heats reign. Mrs. Haywood[4] has been dying of a fever—so have many persons. Sir Thomas Hesketh[5] died at once[6] the night before last—but has long been dying.

The principality of Auverquerque[7] is a sort of Iricism. King William would not allow the Lords Rochford[8] and Grantham[9], as they were illegitimate branches from Prince Maurice and Prince Henry Frederic, to take the name of Nassau, but obliged them to bear those of Zulestein and Auverquerque; after his death they assumed that of Nassau. The Duke of Marlborough never preferred the principality of Mindleheim to his duchy: surely an English peerage with substantial privilege in one's own country is more dignified than a nominal principality in another; when it is transferred to a third country, it is still more ridiculous. I wonder Mademoiselle Pitt does not beg the Pope to create her Princess Fossani. I knew a foreigner at Paris who had a madness of wearing the orders of different countries. He was forbidden to assume the Saint-Esprit, but indulged in every other knighthood. I have seen him at the theatres

[4] Bedchamber Woman to the Duchess of Gloucester.

[5] Sir Thomas Hesketh, first Baronet, of Rufford, Lancashire.

[6] So in MS.; probably a slip for 'of one.'

[7] Lord Cowper, being made a Prince of the Empire, had a mind to have that title; his mother being one of the daughters and co-heiresses of Lord Grantham. *Walpole.*

[8] The father of the first Earl of Rochford of the Nassau family was a natural son of Henry Frederick, Prince of Orange, grandfather of William III.

[9] The grandfather of the first Earl of Grantham (who did not, apparently, assume the name of Nassau) was Maurice, Prince of Orange, great-uncle of William III.

by turns Knight of the Garter, Bath, Thistle, Elephant, &c., &c. We had once a mad Queen Elizabeth here, who on the first day of the session, as my father was coming down from St. James's, gave him her speech and ordered him to read it to her Parliament;—it was not Mrs. Pitt, I assure you, nor Lady Mary Coke.

Strawberry Hill, 8th. Mr. Suckling did not bring me the instrument on Friday, as I expected; so I must reserve my letter till Tuesday.

Strawberry Hill, 10th.

I have not got it yet, so send my letter away without it, and will send it another post.

It looks very much now as if the war would soon make itself. A French squadron is sailed westward, and Captain Digby[10] has been dispatched with another in pursuit of it. Seamen are not apt to be so formal and dilatory as plenipotentiaries. The passions too begin to awaken. The City grows moody again; the stocks fall; the ministers are warmly pressed in both Houses. The new loan of six millions does not take kindly. The bended knee to America does not please. Dr. Franklin boasts that Philadelphia will be starved into a Burgoyneism. Lord Temple seems to snuff confusion and is come forth again, and spoke against the conciliatory bills. Last year he entrapped John the Painter: I suppose he solves these inconsistencies by constancy to *self*. In that light, how uniform has his whole life been; though every brother and every friend has been sacrificed to his passions! I, that sit aloof from the conflict, see these things as they are; and should behold them with indifference, if the general want of principle were not a worse indication of approaching ruin than the concomitant circumstances. All men see a prospect of rising on con-

[10] Captain (afterwards Admiral) Robert Digby (1732-1815), grandson of fifth Baron Digby.

fusion: no man reflects that want of virtue cannot correct what the want of it has occasioned. Adieu!

1842. To the Rev. William Mason.

I return you the sermon, and would not advise its being printed unless much clamoured against; when, as all objections are exaggerated, it will appear less offensive than was expected. I would certainly have the two passages on Dalrymple's History and the sons of the Scottish rebels softened. They should not be quite changed, as they will certainly be remembered. I would entirely omit the glance at the ladies, who are very innocent in comparison of the men of the age. I would still be more earnest for his leaving out the passage on himself. I am totally against such declarations, and can see no reason why he[1] should not be a bishop, when some of its worthless occupiers are gone. I think the time is coming when the sermon will have more weight, and *as it has been preached*, it cannot be recalled. The taxes, the treaty with the Americans, and the probable imminent war with France, will make it little noticed at this moment, but by his enemies. Let them be a little silenced and dashed, and they will not care to clamour. It cannot be lost, because it has been preached; we should have a little patience, and I think it will not be necessary long.

1843. To the Rev. William Mason.

Monday night, late, March 16, 1778.

I had not seen the *Morning Post* when I dissuaded publication[1]. You certainly have had provocation, if you are

Letter 1842.—Hitherto printed as part of the letter to Mason of Jan. 17, 1778. (See *Notes and Queries*, Aug. 4, 1900.)

[1] Mason, the writer of the sermon.

Letter 1843.—[1] The publication

inclined to take it: I trust at least your testimony will not be lost. Perhaps the present instant is not the fittest, as the French Ambassador's declaration has engaged all attention; I mean as far as a first moment can do; for in two days I suppose we shall be as thoughtless as ever. Nay, they who should be most alarmed, seem besotted—indeed they had little way to go; but an old regiment is to sail to-morrow for Halifax. I went out of town on Saturday morning, not knowing of the French declaration [2]; it followed me to Strawberry that night, yet, as if I were a minister, I did not return till this afternoon; and as both Houses are sitting, could get no further intelligence. I shall probably hear something before this sets out, but what can I learn that I do not know? The alternative is to be buffeted by France and turn t'other cheek, or to have England and Ireland invaded. I could almost wish the storm would burst on Scotland; but who would go thither? There is one consolation, however, in our wretched state; it had been ten thousand times more grievous to have America conquered and England enslaved; and the guilty will now be the greatest sufferers. Nay, October was twelvemonth, I should have jumped at an option of the present moment. In short, we are disgraced and ruined, and shall never be what we have been—but Scotland will not triumph. I know not whether the ministers will endeavour to hold their places six months longer by the favour of France; or whether Lord Chatham's old crutch

of Mason's sermon. Mason had drawn Horace Walpole's attention to some remarks on it in the *Morning Post*.

[2] On March 13 'Monsieur de Noailles, the Ambassador of France, delivered to Lord Weymouth a declaration from the King his master, acquainting his Majesty that the King of France had concluded a Treaty of Commerce and Amity with the Independent States of America, but had had the attention for his Majesty of not making it exclusive of their trading with us; but should any interruption be given to the commerce between France and America, the former would support the dignity of their flag.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 223.)

will be sent for to draw a circle round St. James's. I expect nothing but patching and botching from anybody, which will suit the insensibility of the times. There are no grounds for confidence anywhere. We shall moulder piecemeal into our insignificant islandhood, for it is an age for vigorous resurrection. I will go answer the rest of your letter before I go to bed, that I may not dream of our shameful position, nor have visions of revival that will never be realized.

You accuse me very unjustly of neglecting your alteration of my tragedy[3]. I always thought it magic, to be effected by so few words, and should have adopted it, had I ever had thoughts of its being represented; but nothing could induce me to venture it on the stage, not from superabundant modesty, but from the abusive spirit of the times. I have no notion of presenting oneself coolly to a savage mob to be torn to pieces; and you know I am as tender of my friends as of myself. I think this country at present in every light the sink of Europe; void of taste and of everything ingenuous. Calamity has often resuscitated its powers, but there are few or no instances I believe of an empire that has fallen by its own corruptions, replacing itself on its throne. My vanity is too proud to desire to twinkle under the auspices of Palæologi and Porphyrogeniti. Should I be remembered, I should wish it might be as one of the last reign.

I have entirely forgotten what Sir John Dalrymple said in his preface, but am most sure that if he quotes a Walpole as his recommender, it must have been my cousin Thomas; for I never saw the wretch, nor ever had the most indirect connection with him. To Mrs. Macaulay I did give a letter, but am ashamed of it, as she ought to be of her foolish and absurd *Summary*[4], which is a wretched compilation from

[3] *The Mysterious Mother.*

[4] Probably her *History of England from the Revolution to the Present Time, in a Series of Letters to a Friend,*

magazines, full of gross mistakes, and confounding all characters, levelling all for no end or purpose, but to support so silly an hypothesis, as that no king can be a good king, because he is a king. She defends James II for the nonsensical pleasure of abusing King William, and has no more idea of general merit than Sir John Dalrymple. In short, whom does she approve but herself and her idolater—that dirty disappointed hunter of a mitre, Dr. Wilson[5], and Alderman Heathcote, a paltry worthless Jacobite, whom I remember, and her own grandfather Sawbridge[6], who, *she has been told*, was a mighty worthy man, though dipped in the infamous job of the South Sea? In short, I ran through the book, had forgotten it, and only recollect it now to answer your question.

I enclose with this a letter I wrote to you last week, but did not care to send by the post; you will find some curious particulars in it. I have finished certain verses of which you saw part, but shall reserve them till we meet, as I shall the rest of my paper till to-morrow. By the way, I do not know who the transcriber of your sermon is, nor guess what you mean by 'the triumph of the minority,' unless you allude to their carrying one question against Lord North for a tax on places. It would have been a greater blow to the crown than they will ever give, even if they become the majority; but they lost in the next night, on the report, and will take care not to carry it, if ever they are ministers.

17th.

Lord Stormont[7] is recalled, for we are to be angry, since being tame would not do. Dr. Franklin is to be received

of which the first volume was published in 1778.

[5] Dr. Thomas Wilson, Rector of St. Stephen's Church, Wallbrook, where he erected a statue of Mrs. Macaulay within the altar rails. On her second marriage to Mr. Graham, Dr. Wilson quarrelled with her, and sold the statue.

[6] Jacob Sawbridge, a Director of the South Sea Company.

[7] English Ambassador in Paris.

at Versailles to-day as Ambassador. A message is to be delivered to each House to-day, and the majority in each is, I suppose, to answer,—'We will assist you to chastise France for having been forced by you to pick up what you threw away.' Lord North had the modesty yesterday to recommend unanimity, and to affirm he keeps his place from a point of honour. Burke made a fine application of Lord Bedford's answer to King James, 'I had a son who could have advised your Majesty': 'America could have assisted your Majesty.' Charles Fox's reply was in a rougher style. The stocks are not of the heroic majority, yet I believe the ministers will stay from errant fear at St. James's till they are torn out of it. That will be a poor compensation and an useless precedent; for posterity, with all its reading, is never the better for example. James II could read, but could not remember even what he had seen.

Well! I must finish, though my pen's tongue could run on for ever. I feel all sort of feelings, none comfortable, but that we shall be despicable first before we are slaves; the contrary would be more mortifying. France has a right to humble us. The true English who are in America have behaved like Englishmen, without any Scot-alloy. The victories of France will be over Scots. Dr. Franklin's triumph has been over a Scot Ambassador. Pursue this idea; we shall have occasion to pay ourselves with leathern coin.

P.S. Let me know the moment you receive this packet. I add a French tract[8] which you must take care to return, though I understand little of it. The *Gazette Littéraire* will show you how it relates to their present musical

[8] Perhaps the *Entretien sur l'État de la Musique Grecque au Quatrième Siècle*, by the Abbe Barthélemy, sent to Horace Walpole early in March by Madame du Deffand.

contests[9]. What I understand is able and full of address, but surely the irony is above most readers. I shall be glad to have all my gazettes again when you come this waywards.

1844. To Sir Horace Mann.

March 17, 1778.

I have scarce a moment's time to write, and it is only—what an *only*!—to tell you that the French Ambassador notified to Lord Weymouth on Friday, that his court had concluded a treaty of commerce and amity with the independent States of America; *but* had had the *attention* not to make it an exclusive treaty: so, we may *trade* with America, if America will condescend to trade with us. I doubt there were some words of France not being disposed to be molested in their commerce with their new friends. In consequence of that declaration, Lord Stormont's recall was sent off that night. To-day the ministers are to acquaint both Houses with the insult; and, I suppose, intend to be addressed with vows of support. The stocks, not being members of Parliament, do not vote for war, nor behave like heroes. Alas! I am ashamed of irony. Neither do I love to send my auguries through every post-house. However, every one must know that a French war is not exactly a compensation for the loss of America. We, the herd, the *Achivi*, must take the beverage our rulers brew for us; and we that can, must console ourselves with not having contributed to the potion. I believe it will be a bitter one; but I should be still less tranquil if I had furnished a drop.

I have received your melancholy letter on poor Lady Lucy's death, and had written to you on it before, nor will open the wound again. Our situation will remove that cloud, and fill your mind with others.

[9] The disputes of the supporters of Glück and Piccini.

Europe is going again to be a theatre of blood, as America has been. The Emperor and Prussia are going, I think have begun a war! 'Tis endless to moralize; human life is forced to do so, but *en pure perte.* The system changes, not the consequences. Force was the first great arbitress of human affairs. The shrewd observed, that Art could counteract and control Strength—and for a long time Policy ruled. But, Policy having exhausted all its resources, and having been detected in them all, Impudence restored Force, which is now sole governess. She seized and shared Poland, and now sets up the same right to Bavaria. We tried the plan in America, but forgot we had not that essential to the new *jus gentium,* an hundred thousand men, and that our Bavaria[1] was on t'other side of the Atlantic. I hope the ocean, that was against us there, will be our friend at home!

Adieu! This is a new chapter in our correspondence. I will write as events rise; you must excuse me if I have not always time, as I have not at present, to make my letters long in proportion to the matter.

1845. To the Rev. William Mason.

March 26, 1778.

Though you have desired me to write often at this crisis, and though I am never penurious of my ink, I waited till I could send you something more than rumours. The darkness has not hung long without a thunder-clap. France has stopped all our shipping in their ports, and the omniscient Lord Stormont himself has learnt *that* piece of news at Boulogne, being detained there by the embargo.

Letter 1844.—[1] The Emperor and the King of Prussia were at war; the Emperor claiming part of the domains of the late Elector of Bavaria. *Walpole.*

It is also expected that the Spanish Chargé des Affaires will to-day or to-morrow compliment the King with an acknowledgement of the States of America, as civilly as Monsieur de Noailles did. It is even said that Portugal allows their title. Well, say you, and are not people frightened? what is to be done? Frightened; yes, some are—some that are guilty, and more that are innocent; most, not at all! for folly, that sees a ghost, always tumbles down a precipice that is before its eyes. But you *will* have some answer, and I *must* tell you what is to be done; that is, I must foresee, *not* what can be done, but what will be. I believe the oracle at Hayes[1] has been consulted, but not having received *carte blanche*, shrouded its dignity in ambiguity. Perhaps to-day more humble ambassadors have been sent: I vow I do not know there have, but the event I guess. The god himself taking the form of his *Pythonisse*, and enveloped in flannels, that are the symbols of vast vigour of mind beneath, will go to Buckingham House, and finding full acquiescence to all his terms (by taking care to ask none really unpalatable), will then present a long list of names that are to be substituted to the proscribed. Lord Rockingham shall go to Ireland, the Duke of Richmond shall be this, Charles Fox shall be t'other, Mr. Burke something else, &c., &c., &c. I mean after Lord Camden, Lord Shelburne, Barré, Dunning, and perhaps the Duke of Grafton have been appointed to the essential posts. 'Certainly,' will be the answer, 'all are very proper.' Madam, the priestess, then notifies to all the nominees the graces she has bestowed, and orders them to take possession of their several departments. They all laugh in her face, and call her a foolish old beldame, and thus a weak opposition is more weakened. *The most concerned* is not very sorry, the only moment is lost; France will tell you the rest.

LETTER 1845.—[1] The Earl of Chatham.

I sit resigned to our fate, for when one can do no good, and is but an individual, it is impertinent to be anything but passive. I am less alarmed too than I should be, because I had the same apprehensions above thirty years ago, and because I had then thirty years longer to live than I have now. In youth, too, imagination's wing flies as far as it can. Experience tells one that all does not happen that may. I think I shall outlive the storm and talk over the ruins; but in truth I believe they will be considerable. France seems to have waited with wise phlegm for the fullness of time, and we may expect that her blows will be stunning. My idea is, that she will invade us here ostensibly, more effectually in Ireland, in America, and in the East. If she has success in all, and we none, why then Lord Mansfield will shake off his mortal coil, and persuade himself that he always meant the destruction of the house of Hanover, not its *unbounded* elevation. These are my sober cool opinions. I shall be glad to be a lying prophet, for Jeremiah himself was a sad fellow if he comforted himself under captivity with the honour of having predicted it.

Yours ever,

H. W.

1846. To Sir Horace Mann.

March 27, 1778.

The war is not yet arrived, though it is certainly at next door, for France laid an embargo on all our vessels in their ports; one may call it, seized them. Lord Stormont himself, though got to Boulogne, is forced to stay there for want of conveyance, or must come round by Holland. This made us stare a little two days ago; but last night I heard that this hostility is conditional, and only a boisterous way of wrenching out of our hands the *Kouli Khan*, a French ship that we had taken, and that Monsieur de Noailles had

reclaimed without success. I doubt we shall take and give so many of these slaps, that the declaration of war may, to save trouble, be reserved to the peace; and then, as Hamlet says,

> the funeral baked meats
> Will coldly furnish forth the marriage supper.

There was a report, too, that Spain would send us a notification of having made a treaty with the Americans also; but this is contradicted, and their new Ambassador, Almadovar, is said to have received orders to come to us forthwith. In short, rumours of wars beget a thousand other reports. The town has expected a restoration of Lord Chatham; but that notion has subsided too. The best thing I do know is, that we are very seriously occupied in defending ourselves. No more troops are to go to America; we are collecting our whole force; the new-raised regiments will have been an advantageous addition, as they were not embarked; and the militia, which is complete in every county but two, is to take the field. As to America, it will certainly retain its seat amongst the sovereignties of this world: so, Columbus's invasion begins to be set aside; and one quarter of the globe will not be held *in commendam* by another! Imagination could expatiate widely on that chapter—but what have I to do with a new era in the annals of mankind?

Our own old continent, that has so long been ravaged by ambition, is not yet abandoned to the comfort of decay. Yet one now hears that hostilities between the Emperor and Prussia have not commenced, as was said. I doubt that imperial philosopher, who scattered so many humane apophthegms last year at Paris, is a little too impatient to employ his Austrian talons. What a farce to visit hospitals, when one thinks of nothing but stocking them with maimed carcasses! What buckets of blood it costs, before a prince

takes his place at the table of Fame, that might be earned so much better by benevolence! The enemies of mankind arrogate what is due only to the friends.

I was going on perhaps in a string of moralities, but was interrupted by Dr. Monro, who came to tell me that Lord Orford is come to himself. This is such a deliverance to me, that I cannot think of any consequences: indeed, I do not care about them. I have done nothing but what I would repeat to-morrow on the same necessity. His first act of sanity was to write to his rascally steward. The doctor brought me the letter unsealed, and I have sealed it *with my own seal* and sent it. I am sending to all my relations and making the recovery as public as I can; and have desired the doctor to quit my Lord as soon as he possibly can with safety. This is all I shall condescend to do; for if he gives himself up again, as I do not doubt but he will, to the same crew, I scorn to interfere. When the law says he is mad, I will take care of him; when it says he is in his senses, I shall not dispute it. When one does what is rigidly right, one wrongs oneself if one is concerned that others are unjust. Pray notify this lucid interval to the excellent Signora Madre[1]. Adieu!

1847. To the Rev. William Cole.

Arlington Street, March 31, 1778.

I did think it long, indeed, dear Sir, since I heard from you, and am very sorry the gout was the cause. I hope after such long persecution, you will have less now than you apprehend.

I should not have been silent myself, had I had anything to tell you that you would have cared to hear. Politics have been the only language, and abuse the only expression

Letter 1846.—[1] The Countess of Orford.

of the winter, neither of which are, or deserve to be, inmates of your peaceable hermitage. I wish, however, they may not have grown so serious as to threaten every retreat with intrusion!

I will let you know when I am settled at Strawberry Hill, and can look over your kind collections relating to Mr. Baker. He certainly deserves his place in the *Biographia*: but I am not surprised that *you* would not submit to *his* being instituted and inducted by a Presbyterian[1]. In truth, I, who have not the same zeal against Dissenters, do not at all desire to peruse the history of their apostles; which are generally very uninteresting.

You must excuse the shortness of this, in which, too, I have been interrupted. My nephew is as suddenly recovered as he did last time; and, though I am far from thinking him perfectly in his senses, a great deal of his disorder is removed, which, though it will save me a great deal of trouble, hurries me at present, and forces me to conclude.

Yours most sincerely,

Hor. Walpole.

1848. To the Rev. William Mason.

Arlington Street, April 8, 1778.

Though my daily fellow labourers of this morning will give you a minute account of the great event of yesterday, I should be a very negligent gazetteer if I took no notice of it. Lord Chatham fell in the senate—not by daggers, nor by the thunder of Lord Suffolk's eloquence. He had spoken with every symptom of debility, repeated his own phrases, could not recollect his own ideas, and, which was no new practice, persisted in our asserting sovereignty over America,

Letter 1847.—[1] Dr. Kippis.

though he could not tell by what means. It was only new to confess his ignorance. The Duke of Richmond answered him with much decency and temper, though Lord Chatham had called *pursuit without means* timid and pusillanimous conduct. The Earl was rising to reply, but fell down in a second fit of apoplexy, with strong convulsions and slabbering at the mouth. I do not doubt but the *Morning Post* will allow the Duke more rhetoric than it ever acknowledged, in order to ascribe Lord Chatham's fall to his Grace's invectives; but he, who is all tenderness and sensibility, was so affected, that at night the Duchess[1] desired me not to name it: yet Lord Chatham is not dead, and to-day is better, if existing after two strokes can be called so. To be sure his biographer would have a fairer field, had he died in his vocation. In truth, I see no good he could have done, since he has embraced the idea of still conquering America; but much harm he must have occasioned had the court adopted him. Now I reckon him politically dead. He will probably neither recover strength nor faculties; his family will if possible prevent his reappearance, and the court will scarce inoculate a half-dead skeleton on their other infirmities. Lord Chatham certainly went to the House to express resentment at their having only dabbled with him indirectly, but his debility, or perhaps some gleam of hope of being yet adopted, moderated his style: his water-gall Lord Temple was at his elbow.

I can tell you nothing definitive on war or peace. Pacification with France, and even with America, has been much sounded these last days, probably to prop the stocks; but the selection of Governor Johnstone for one of the Commissioners, who even during all the late debates anathematized American independence, implies not only adherence to sovereignty but no thoughts of change. Of Johnstone

LETTER 1848.—[1] The Duchess of Richmond.

it is enough to say, that though a Scot in opposition, he never lost sight of the promised land.

You may thank me for so much politics when I am overwhelmed with other business, and have even the militia on my hands. My nephew is suddenly come to himself again—only to his former self; but I must not tap this chapter—I should be endless. He is gone to take the command of the Norfolk militia, and I am commissioned to dissuade him! *De profundis clamavi!* Well, fortune has some justice and dispenses antidotes with poisons. The Duke of Gloucester's children are to have a Parliamentary provision, and, considering everything, a very decent one. There is one thorn removed. I have recourse to my old anodynes, quartos, whenever I can snatch a moment. I have gone through Mr. Pennant's *Welsh Tour*, which is a patchwork of all sorts of shreds stitched together with unpronounceable words, of DDwrr'rs and no vowels, so I do not remember much of what I cannot articulate. I have dipped into Mr. Warton's second volume[2], which seems more unentertaining than the former. I perceive he excommunicates Rowley totally. Lord Hardwicke is to present us on Saturday with two volumes of State Papers, but with due circumspection keeps back his by far most curious letters. I have a long conversation with Dr. Robertson to relate to you, but must reserve for some moment of more leisure. It would not be time lost to come to me for a week and hear me exhaust my wallet: you must not reckon upon too distant moments! My tattered frame grows weaker and weaker. I waste as few minutes as possible, but constant application of the mind to some duties or other will impair a memory that is enclosed in so frail an *étui*. Have you seen *The Old Baron*[3], a Gothic

[2] The second volume of the *History of Poetry*.

[3] *The Old English Baron*, by Clara Reeve (1729–1807).

story, professedly written in imitation of *Otranto*, but reduced to reason and probability! It is so probable, that any trial for murder at the Old Bailey would make a more interesting story. Mrs. Barbut's[4] *Fragment* was excellent. This is a *caput mortuum*. Adieu. I have not a quarter of a minute to say more.

1849. To Sir Horace Mann.

Thursday, April 9th, 1778.

I am not going to announce more war than by my last: it seems to sleep, like a *paroli* at faro, and be reserved for another deal. Though I write oftener than usual, I have not a full cargo every time; but I have two novel events to send you. The newspapers indeed anticipate many of my articles; but, as I suppose you pay me the compliment of opening my letters before the *Gazettes*, I shall be the first to inform you, though but by five minutes. Lord Chatham has again appeared in the House of Lords, and probably for the last time. He was there on Tuesday, against the earnest remonstrance of his physician; and, I think, only to make confusion worse confounded. He had intended to be very hostile to the ministers, and yet to force himself into all their places by maintaining the sovereignty of America, to which none of the opposition but his own few followers adhere; and they cannot, like a strolling company in a barn, fill all the parts of a drama with four or five individuals. It appeared early in his speech that he had lost himself; he did not utter half he intended, and sat down: but, rising to reply to the Duke of Richmond, he fell down in an apoplectic fit, and was thought dead. They transported him into the Jerusalem Chamber, and laid him on a table. In twenty minutes he

[4] Mrs. Barbauld; according to Mitford this was *Don Bertrand: a Fragment.*

recovered his senses, and was carried to a messenger's house adjoining, where he still remains. The scene was very affecting; his two sons[1], and son-in-law, Lord Mahon, were round him. The House paid a proper mark of respect by adjourning instantly.

The same incertitude remains on our general situation. I pretend to tell you facts only, not reasonings; and therefore will say no more now on the public. One event, indeed, of Parliamentary complexion touches my private feelings very particularly. The King has demanded a provision for his younger children, and has been so good as to add the Duke's to the list—nobly too, both from the proportion and the circumstances of the times. The King's sons are to have ten thousand a year each, his daughters six, Prince William eight, and Princess Sophia four. Thus, both income and rank are ascertained. This is a great thorn extracted from all our sides, and I trust will have good influence on his Royal Highness's health.

I am debarrassed (not in so comfortable a way) of my nephew. He has resumed the entire dominion of himself, and is gone into the country, and intends to command the militia. I have done all I could, when scarce anything was in my power, to prevent it; but in vain. He has even asked to be a major-general, which officers of militia cannot be. What a humiliation to know he is thus exposing himself, and not dare to interpose! Yet is he not ignorant of his situation. He said the other day to his Dalilah, speaking of Dr. Monro, 'Patty, I like this doctor! don't you? We

LETTER 1849.—[1] John Pitt (1756–1835), Viscount Pitt, eldest son of first Earl of Chatham, whom he succeeded on May 11, 1778; entered the army in 1774; full General, 1812; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1788–94.

Hon. William Pitt (1759–1806), second son of first Earl of Chatham; entered Parliament as M.P. for Appleby, 1781; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1782–83; First Lord of the Treasury (Prime Minister) and Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1783–1801; First Lord of the Treasury (Prime Minister), 1804–6.

will have him *next time.*' What an amazing compost of sense, insensibility, and frenzy! His recovery was as marvellous. He waked, could scarce articulate, and thought himself paralytic. The keeper gave him a common apothecary's draught. In a quarter of an hour he said, 'What have you given me? It has removed a weight from my head'—and thence talked rationally. It seems to me to indicate that frenzy is occasioned by a gathering of matter or water that presses on the brain and disorders it, and that what he felt as paralytic, was the crisis preceding an internal discharge. It even looks in him as if it took the same time to come to maturity. Last fit lasted under or about thirteen months; this not quite twelve—I hope the next will be as long gathering as the last, three years! Finding him so little affected by his situation, I ventured to preach temperance and quiet to him; told him how many many years he might live with care, and painted my own age and weakness, and my brother's greater age; that he might be assured we have too much sense to propose surviving him—but, alas! they who knew he was mad before we did, took care to sow seeds of distrust, that all my care and tenderness will as little remove as my reasoning. Well; be it so; right is right, whatever success it has or not. I hope other mad persons will find benefit from my conduct—and then I shall never think it thrown away. If he knew how little I reckon on my own life, he could not suspect me of looking to reversions. His crew would rejoice at the shocks my anxiety about him have given to my constitution; for though I never pretended to tenderness, for which in his life he never gave me cause, the fatigues and disquiet have sapped so frail a tenement as mine—my prospects are far from being distant! They did extend to my family—have been often torn up violently, have as often sprung up again—now perhaps it is as wise,

both on public and private [grounds], to adopt that forced and selfish philosophy (that never grows naturally on comfort) of saying to oneself, 'Well, my time is near elapsed; what signifies what one shall not know?'—With the leave of Monsr. de la Rochefoucault, however self-love may enter masked into all our actions, I cannot believe that many have the impudence to own it even to themselves—for myself, I am sure, I must be hard driven, whenever I take up with myself as the sole object of my views! Adieu!

1850. To Earl Harcourt.

April 16, 1778.

It is at the bottom of the first volume of the notes to p. 346 of Warton's second volume, that your Lordship will find how the Erle of Harcourt served the Kyng of his spyce-plate. That Kyng was the real, not nominal, Kyng of France. Will not this piece of intelligence entitle me at least to the post of Harcourt-Pursuivant?

I am very ambitious of serving that most ancient and noble house, to which I am bounden by inclination, zeal, and gratitude; and though I am not thought worthy of being *Printer* to it, I will never miss any occasion of showing myself

Lord and Lady Harcourt's
Most devoted humble servant.

1851. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, April 18, 1778.

I am come hither like a good Christian to pass in retreat the holy week before Easter, and the unholy week of Newmarket, which has almost beaten Easter out of the calendar, and to which yet I would give a Scripture appella-

tion, and call it the *passover*. In these ten days I shall probably fulfil my promise of sending you the heads of my interview with Dr. Robertson; but I will tell you first the little else I have to say. Most people expect a French war: I still doubt it, I do not very well know why, but it does not seem a very decisive age. The Turks and Russians have not yet drawn blood. I take the Emperor to be the most impatient to be a Cæsar, and his mother, I suppose, is very ready to employ him at a distance from home.

The Commissioners are gone, and Mr. Adams[1] is arrived at Paris. As we do not know the amount of their treaty, all we do is in the dark. I suspect that Dr. Franklin has duped Governor Johnstone, and yet many a dishonest man has been made a fool, as well as many an honest one.

The opposition are notoriously split into two factions. Lord Shelburne heads the Chathamites, and puts me in mind of a French beggar, who asked charity as one of the *Quinze-Vingt aveugles*; 'Why,' said the person he applied to, 'you are not blind!' 'Hélas! non, monsieur,' said the fellow, 'je ne suis qu'un aspirant.'

The Foleys are at last likely to lose their cause[2] by the

LETTER 1851.—[1] John Adams, who replaced Silas Deane as American Commissioner in Paris.

[2] Lord Foley and his brother applied to Parliament to have their father's will set aside in order that they might be able to pay the principal of their debts. 'They were so popular: and Charles Fox, whose example and society had contributed to their ruin, and for whom they were bound too for above 40,000*l.*, and the rest of the young nobility at Almack's, and the fashionable young women of quality, who were Lady Henrietta's* friends, pushed the affair with so much vehemence, that even Lord Mansfield and Lord Camden, though condemning the cause and still more the fatal precedent of setting aside wills, determined to absent themselves and let the bill pass. But the Duke of Richmond, though pitying Lady Henrietta, uncle of and connected in party with Charles Fox, and inclined to favour the Foleys, was too upright and honest to bear this time-serving of the two great lawyers, and when the bill was presented, insisted on their attending it, that he might from them learn what he ought to do. They both endeavoured to avoid it. . . . The honest Duke would not

* Wife of Lord Foley.

indecent impetuosity of their partisans. If you have not seen it in the papers, you will. Oh, I have begun my letter on a torn sheet, but I cannot write it over again, and so shall proceed. Yes, you will thank me for an admirable *bon mot* of George Selwyn. When the Foleys had more chance of cancelling their father's will, he said, 'The New Testament will now be more favourable to the Jews than the Old.'

There is a pretty poem just published called *The Wreath of Fashion*: it is written by one Tickell[3], a son of Addison's friend. He has been an assistant at Eton, and wrote this winter another poem at least as good, called *The Project.* The conclusion of the new is very inferior to the rest, and ends absurdly, like Anstey's on Lord Tavistock[4], with a hemistich; and as absurdly with a panegyric on that water-gruel bard Shenstone, who never wrote anything good but his *Schoolmistress. The Wreath* is a satire on sentimental poets, amongst whom, still more absurdly, he classes Charles Fox; but there is a great deal of wit *par cy, par là.* He calls sentimental comedies *dramatic homilies*; says Lord Palmerston *fineers* (what an admirable word!) rebus's and charades with chips of poetry; and when Lord of the Admiralty, like Ariel, wrecked navies with a song—sure that is an excellent application.

I have very near finished Warton, but, antiquary as I am, it was a tough achievement. He has dipped into an incredible ocean of dry and obsolete authors of the dark ages, and has brought up more rubbish than riches, but the

accept their excuses, but insisted on their naming a day when they could attend, which they were forced to do. For this, as usual, he was grievously abused; and the beautiful Countesses of Sefton and Barrymore, Lady Foley's sisters, said everything that rage could suggest of him.' (*Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 226.)

[3] Richard Tickell (1751–1793), grandson, not son, of Addison's friend, Thomas Tickell.

[4] An elegy on the death of the Marquis of Tavistock, published in 1767.

latter chapters, especially on the progress and revival of the theatre, are more entertaining; however it is very fatiguing to wade through the muddy poetry of three or four centuries that had never a poet.

Have you heard how Voltaire has been at his own Apotheosis? He has literally been crowned with laurel in a side box at his *Irène*, and seen the actors and actresses decorate his bust with garlands on the stage. As he is so very old, one must excuse his submitting to this vanity; nay, it must have been moving,—yet one is more charmed with the *violette, qui se cache sous l'herbe* [5].

As Lord and Lady Strafford are to drink tea here this evening, I shall desire my Lord to frank this modicum, that you may not pay for a scrap that has nothing in it. My conversation with the Scottish historian is as little worth, especially after I had prepared you for expecting it. When do you quit your cathedral for your parish? I shall not leave my little hill for the dinner at the Royal Academy on Thursday, only to figure the next day in the newspapers in the list of the Mecænas's of the age. Lady Di Beauclerk has drawn the portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire, and it has been engraved by Bartolozzi. A Castalian nymph conceived by Sappho, and executed by Myron, would not have had more grace and simplicity; it is the divinity of Venus piercing the veil of immortality, when

> *roseâ cervice refulsit,*
> *Ambrosiaeque comae divinum vertice odorem*
> *Spiravere.*

The likeness is perfectly preserved, except that the paintress has lent her own expression to the Duchess, which you will allow is very agreeable flattery. What should I go to the Royal Academy for? I shall see no such *chefs-d'œuvre* there.

[5] See letter of Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan, Dec. 1, 1680.

1852. To the Rev. William Mason.

[1778.]

The purport of Dr. Robertson's visit was to inquire where he could find materials for the reigns of King William and Queen Anne, which he means to write as a supplement to David Hume. I had heard of his purpose, but did not own I knew it, that my discouragement might seem the more natural. I do not care a straw what he writes about the Church's wet-nurse, Goody Anne; but no Scot is worthy of being the historian of William, but Dr. Watson.

When he had told me his object, I said, 'Write the reign of King William, Dr. Robertson! That is a great task! I look on him as the greatest man of modern times since his ancestor William Prince of Orange.' I soon found the Doctor had very little idea of him, or had taken upon trust the pitiful partialities of Dalrymple and Macpherson. I said, 'Sir, I do not doubt but King William came over with a view to the crown; nor was he called upon by patriotism, for he was not an Englishman, to assert our liberties. No; his patriotism was of a higher rank. He aimed not at the crown of England from ambition, but to employ its forces and wealth against Louis XIV for the common cause of the liberties of Europe. The Whigs did not understand the extent of his views, and the Tories betrayed him. He has been thought not to have understood us; but the truth was, he took either party as it was predominant, that he might sway the Parliament to support his general plan.' The Doctor, suspecting that I doubted his principles being enlarged enough to do justice to so great a character, told me he himself had been born and bred a Whig, though he owned he was *now* a moderate one: I believe, a very moderate one. I said Macpherson had

done great injustice to another hero, the Duke of Marlborough, whom he accuses of betraying the design on Brest to Louis XIV. The truth was, as I heard often in my youth from my father, my uncle, and old persons who had lived in those times, that the Duke trusted the Duchess with the secret, and she her sister the popish Duchess of Tyrconnel, who was as poor and as bigoted as a church mouse. A corroboration of this was the wise and sententious answer of King William to the Duke, whom he taxed with having betrayed the secret. 'Upon my honour, Sir,' said the Duke, 'I told it to nobody but my wife.' 'I did not tell it to mine!' said the King.

I added, that Macpherson's and Dalrymple's invidious scandals really serve but to heighten the amazing greatness of the King's genius; for, if they say true, he maintained the crown on his head, though the nobility, the churchmen, the country gentlemen, the people were against him; and though almost all his own ministers betrayed him. 'But,' said I, 'nothing is so silly as to suppose that the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Godolphin ever meant seriously to restore King James. Both had offended him too much to expect forgiveness, especially from so remorseless a nature. Yet a re-Revolution was so probable, that it is no wonder they kept up a correspondence with him, at least to break their fall if he returned. But as they never did effectuate the least service in his favour, when they had the fullest power, nothing can be inferred but King James's folly in continuing to lean on them. To imagine they meant to sacrifice his weak daughter, whom they governed absolutely, to a man who was sure of being governed by others, one must have as little sense as James himself had.'

The precise truth I take to have been this. Marlborough and Godolphin both knew the meanness and credulity of

James's character. They knew that he must be ever dealing for partisans; and they might be sure, that if he could hope for support from the General and the Lord-Treasurer, he must be less solicitous for more impotent supporters. 'Is it impossible,' said I to the Doctor, 'but they might correspond with the King even by Anne's own consent? Do not be surprised, Sir,' said I: 'such things have happened. My own father often received letters from the Pretender, which he always carried to George II and had them endorsed by his Majesty. I myself have seen them countersigned by the King's own hand.'

In short, I endeavoured to impress him with proper ideas of his subject, and painted to him the difficulties, and the want of materials. But the booksellers will out-argue me, and the Doctor will forget his education. *Panem et Circenses*, if you will allow me to use the latter for those that are captivated by favour in the *circle*, will decide his writing and give the colour. I once wished he should write the History of King William; but his *Charles V* and his *America* have opened my eyes, and the times have shut his. Adieu!

1853. To Charles Bedford.

Dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, April 23, 1778.

I shall be much obliged to you if you will call to-morrow evening at the Somerset House Coffee-house, and inquire into the truth of the enclosed advertisement; and if you find it a true case, I will beg you to pay what money is wanted, or the whole thirty-nine shillings if no other money has been sent. I will make you no excuse for giving you this trouble, as I am sure you will execute the commission with pleasure.

Yours sincerely,
H. W.

1854. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, April 23, 1778.

I thank you, dear Sir, for the notice of William de Worcestre's[1] appearance, and will send for my book as soon as I go to town, which will not be till next week. I have been here since Friday as much a hermit as yourself. I wanted air and quiet, having been much fatigued on my nephew's amendment, trying to dissuade him from making the campaign with his militia; but in vain! I now dread hearing of some eccentric freak.

I am sorry Mr. Tyson has quite dropped me, though he sometimes comes to town. I am still more concerned at your frequent disorders—I hope their chief seat is unwillingness to move.

Your 'Bakeriana' will be very welcome about June: I shall not be completely resident here till then; at least not have leisure, as May is the month in which I have most visits from town.

As few spare hours as I have, I have contrived to go through Mr. Pennant's *Welsh Tour*, and Mr. Warton's second volume; both which come within the circle of your pursuits. I have far advanced, too, in Lord Hardwicke's first volume of State Papers. I have yet found nothing that opens a new scene, or sets the old in a new light; yet they are rather amusing, though not in proportion to the bulk of the volumes. One likes to hear actors speak for themselves—but, on the other hand, they use a great many more words than are necessary; and when one knows the events from history, it is a little tiresome to go back to the details and the delays.

Letter 1854.—[1] *Itineraria Symonis Simeonis et Willelmi de Worcestre, quibus accedit tractatus de Metro,* edited by James Nasmith.

I should be glad to employ Mr. Essex on my offices; but the impending war with France deters me. It is not a season for expense! I could like to leave my little castle complete: but, though I am only a spectator, I cannot be as indifferent to the melancholy aspect of the times, as the country gentleman was, who was going out with his hounds as the two armies at Edge Hill were going to engage! I wish for peace and tranquillity, and should be glad to pass my remaining hours in the idle and retired amusements I love, and without any solicitude for my country. Adieu.

Yours most sincerely,

H. Walpole.

1855. To Edward Gibbon.

Dear Sir, [1778.]

I have gone through your Inquisitor's[1] attack, and am far from being clear that it deserves your giving yourself the trouble of an answer, as neither the detail nor the result affects your argument. So far from it, many of his reproofs are levelled at your having quoted a wrong page; he confessing often that what you have cited is in the author referred to, but not precisely in the individual spot. If St. Peter is attended by a corrector of the press, you will certainly never be admitted where he is a porter. I send you my copy, because I scribbled my remarks. I do not send them with the impertinent presumption of suggesting a hint to you, but to prove I did not grudge the trouble of going through such a book when you desired it, and to show how little struck me as of any weight.

Letter 1855.—Misplaced by C. amongst letters of Dec. 1778.

[1] Henry Edwards Davis (1756–1784), of Balliol College, Oxford. In the spring of 1778 he published an *Examination* of the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. Gibbon replied in a *Vindication* published in Jan. 1779.

I have set down nothing on your imputed plagiarisms; for, if they are so, no argument that has ever been employed must be used again, even where the passage necessary is applied to a different purpose. An author is not allowed to be master of his own works; but, by Davis's new law, the first person that cites him would be so. You probably looked into Middleton, Dodwell[2], &c.; had the same reflections on the same circumstances, or conceived them so as to recollect them, without remembering what suggested them. Is this plagiarism? If it is, Davis and such cavillers might go a short step further, and insist that an author should peruse every work antecedently written on every subject at all collateral to his own—not to assist him, but to be sure to avoid every material touched by his predecessors.

I will make but one remark on such divine champions. Davis and his prototypes tell you Middleton, &c., have used the same objections, and they have been *confuted*: *answering*, in the theologic dictionary, signifying *confuting*; no matter whether there is sense, argument, truth in the answer or not.

Upon the whole, I think ridicule is the only answer such a work is entitled to. The ablest answer which you can make (which would be the ablest answer that could be made) would never have any authority with the cabal, yet would allow a sort of dignity to the author. His patrons will always maintain that he vanquished you, unless you made him too ridiculous for them to dare to revive his name. You might divert yourself, too, with Alma Mater, the Church, employing a *goujat* to defend the citadel, while the generals repose in their tents. If Irenæus, St. Augustine, &c., did not set apprentices and proselytes

[2] Probably William Dodwell, D.D. (1709–1785), theological writer and controversialist.

to combat Celsus and the adversaries of the new religion —but early bishops had not five or six thousand pounds a year.

In short, dear Sir, I wish you not to lose your time; that is, either not reply, or set *your mark* on your answer, that it may always be read with the rest of your works.

1856. To Earl Harcourt.

May 6, 1778.

The space for the inscription on which your Lordship does me the honour of consulting me, I do not remember to have seen, and yet I am far from objecting to it, as it is quite in the *esprit du gothique*. The person, however, who drew it, is not correct, especially in his trefoils. He ought to copy the pattern exactly, of which there are many in Dart's *Westminster* or *Canterbury*. If the figures are painted, the arms must be so too; and then I should like to have the whole tomb enlivened with gold and azure. Mr. T. Pitt would sketch the Gothic part for your Lordship better than anybody, or so would Sandby next.

Pray do not give yourself the trouble, my dear Lord, this week of calling, unless you have a moment to-morrow, for I go to Strawberry on Friday. I would not take the liberty of mentioning to-morrow, if I had not something to show you, that I cannot bring to you, and that would pay your pains.

Your Lordship's most devoted,

H. Walpole.

1857. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, May 9, 1778.

As I have engaged myself to stock your impatience with frequent intelligence, you may think a month's interval

a kind of breach of promise; but though I write to display my diligence, it is not to convey any event. You yourself have told us all the fact we know; at least, the newspapers have done *you* the honour of sending the information of the sailing of the Toulon squadron—not in terms; but they say an express arrived from Sir H. Mann without eating, drinking, or sleeping; and we know nothing else—I mean we, the people,—that corresponds with the date of such importance. Pray can you tell whether our fleet is gone after it? For the newspapers would persuade us that Lord Sandwich has detained it at Portsmouth, to divert their Majesties[1], as if they loved shows better than dominions.

We shall be in no want of sights this summer: every county will have a camp of its own; the coasts will be amused with sieges. An American privateer[2] has attempted Whitehaven, and plundered Lord Selkirk's[3] house. This is a little ungrateful, for the Americans certainly owe their independence to the Scots; though, to be sure, in strictness it was not what the Scots intended for them. They have done, or will do us some good too, though perhaps with as little design; for I think we shall be forced to come to our senses. Great countries ought always to be physicked and dieted after long peace or a course of victories; for prosperity either breeds humours in the body, or flies to the head: the first produce tumours, and the latter *absolute* madness.

Lord Chatham has been at the point of death, but is said

LETTER 1857.—[1] The King and Queen visited Portsmouth early in May 1778.

[2] The *Ranger*, commanded by the naval adventurer, Paul Jones (1747-1792). He landed on St. Mary's Isle in Kirkcudbright Bay with the intention of kidnapping Lord Selkirk, who was absent. Some silver plate was taken away by Jones' men, but was afterwards bought by Jones, and returned to Lady Selkirk. One of the articles was a silver teapot, which was taken straight from the breakfast table. When the plate was returned five years later, the tea-leaves were still in the teapot! (Information from Hon. J. A. Home.)

[3] Dunbar Douglas (1722-1799), fourth Earl of Selkirk.

to be better. It is not very likely, however, that he should recover enough to come forth again. You tell me his sister[4] is at Florence. Her friends, the Butes, have a new calamity in their family, for which I pity them: Lady Percy[5] is breeding, and the suit for a divorce is commenced. Lady Bute has been very unfortunate in her children, though there never was a better or more discreet mother. Lady Percy is very weak; and some time ago, when Lady Bute received some intimation on her conduct, she said, 'Upon my word, I have not room in my head for that misfortune!'

I have told you all I know of my nephew. He is now occupied with his militia—whether it will overset him again, or make him a hero, I cannot tell. I endeavour to think on him as little as I can: philosophy is excusable, when every exertion is vain!

Let me ask if you gave *your* nephew any parcel of my letters. Why does he not return directly? He would find enough here to dissipate him. He should marry again—not that I would recommend a wife to him—yet depend upon it, we shall grow a soberer people.

Though I write this on the Saturday, it cannot depart till Tuesday. Probably I shall have little to add. Next month will be more prolific of intelligence. Yet make no account of my auguries. I have lived too long, and have been too often mistaken in my calculations, to trust my own reason or that of others. Half our conjectures are built on Ignorance, and her sister Chance governs the rest.

My mind is a little one, and apt to fluctuate. I answer for nothing but my principles, and never committed them to the guidance of events; so, though my letters may have

[4] Miss Anne Pitt.

[5] Lady Anne Stuart, third daughter of third Earl of Bute; m. (1764) Hugh Percy, Earl Percy, eldest son of first Duke of Northumberland, from whom she was divorced in March 1779.

been affected by the weather-glass, the sum total has been uniform. I have hoped or feared; but always in the same spirit—the liberty and happiness of England.

Arlington Street, 11th.

I must unsay a material passage in my letter: Lord Chatham died this morning! I am of opinion Lord Temple died at the same moment, or had better think he did. We shall have opportunities of seeing whether the mantle of the former is descended upon anybody! Lord Shelburne will probably pretend that it was a legacy to him; but, without Lord Chatham's *fortune* too, a *cloak* will be of little use. Well! with all his defects, Lord Chatham will be a capital historic figure. France dreaded his crutch to this very moment; but I doubt she does not think that it has left a stick of the wood!—no offence to Mrs. Anne, who, I allow, has great parts, and not less ambition: but *Fortune* did not treat her as a twin.

Tuesday morning.

Last night the House of Commons voted a funeral and monument to Lord Chatham at the public expense, and the members are to walk at the burial.

1858. To the Duchess of Gloucester.

May 10, 1778.

I do assure you, Madam, your Royal Highness is totally mistaken about Lord Ch.[1], whom I have not seen this month. I received my account from no relation or friend, but from a gentleman of the strictest honour, who came to me as not knowing else how to convey the information to you. I will upon no account name him, as I gave him my word I would not. I am extremely happy there is no truth in

Letter 1858.—[1] Possibly Lord Cholmondeley.

the idea, though it came to me in so serious a manner and from a man so incapable of an ill meaning, that it was my duty to acquaint you with it; and as I desired to be named to your daughters, they will know how kind my intention was, and that I am, as I have professed to them, as affectionate as if I was their father.

I shall be very glad, Madam, of your brother's[2] picture, and will try to find a place for it; but it is far from being the only near relation of whom I have no portrait—I have none of Lord Dysart, of the Bishop[3], of Lady Malpas, of Mr. and Mrs. Cholmondeley, of Lady Cadogan, &c.—and therefore the remark of the persons that observed your brother's being wanting, was not very good-natured to him or me. Many of the family pictures I happened to have; others I begged as I wanted them for particular places; and, indeed, furnished my house to please myself, not to please such people as those who have been so obliging as to tell your Royal Highness that my not having your brother's picture was a mark of contempt. I have no desire of pleasing those who were capable of saying such a thing to you. Your affection for his memory is most amiable, and I shall obey you with pleasure; but allow me to say, Madam, that I hope you will always judge of me by what you know of me, and not from comments of others. I have been taxed with partiality for *you*, long before there was a question of your present rank; nor do I believe you suspect me of attachment to you from that motive. I am too old, too independent, and too contented, to have hopes or fears from anybody. I have the highest respect for his Royal Highness's character and virtues, and always shall have; and am proud of paying my court to him, when it

[2] Edward Walpole the younger; d. 1771. Horace Walpole's nephew by marriage.

[3] The late Bishop of Exeter,

can only flow from personal reverence. Were he in the situation he ought to be, I should be but the less anxious to show it.

Indeed I little expected to be suspected of wanting attachment to any part of my family. I have been laughed at, perhaps deservedly, for family pride, which certainly is not always a proof of family affection. I trust I have given proofs that they are not disunited in me; and yet, except from my father, I never received either benefits or favours; and from him only my places, and a small fortune not paid. Thus, whatever I have, except my share of Mr. Shorter's[4] fortune that came to me by his leaving no will, and consequently was no obligation, I neither received from my family nor owe to it. It has been saved by my own prudence, is my own to dispose of as I please, and, however I distribute it, or to whom, will be a gift, not a claim.

I should not say thus much, Madam, but when any one can think it worth while to make invidious remarks to you on a tender point with you, on what is or is not in my house, you will allow me to justify myself, and even open my heart to you, to whom I desire it should be known, though I certainly owe no account to anybody on so trifling a subject as the furniture of a house which I am master to do what I please with, living or dead. It was from no disregard for your brother that I had not his picture. I love Lady Cadogan very much, as I do, surely, your daughters and nieces, yet have not happened to have their pictures: and though I have probably said a great deal too much, like an old man, it is always a mark of affection when I submit myself on an unjust accusation; and as tenderness for my family is the duty in which I have in my whole life been the least culpable, though very blamable in a thousand other respects, it is very pardonable to be

[4] Erasmus Shorter, uncle of Horace Walpole; d. 1753.

circumstantial and prolix to her whose reproach was kind and good, and whom I desire to convince that I have neither wanted affection for my family, nor am unjust to it. I have the honour to be, Madam, your Royal Highness's most faithful, humble servant.

1859. To the Rev. William Mason.

May 12, 1778.

I now and then write a letter for, rather than to, you; that is, when they will bear delay, and be equally fresh, and when they contain anecdotes that I do not care to send by the post if they are too personal, and I have not a prospect of sudden conveyance. The following will have all these ingredients, and will rather be an epitome of the manners of the time, than a letter. The characteristics of the age are frenzy, folly, extravagance, and insensibility; no wonder when such stars are predominant, that ruin both stalks on, and is not felt or apprehended.

About ten days ago I wanted a housemaid, and one presented herself very well recommended. I said, 'But, young woman, why do you leave your present place?' She said she could not support the hours she kept; that her lady never went to bed till three or four in the morning. 'Bless me, child,' said I, 'why, you tell me you live with a bishop's wife: I never heard that Mrs. North[1] gamed or raked so late.' 'No, Sir,' said she, 'but she is three hours undressing.' Upon my word, the edifice that takes three hours to demolish must at least be double the time in fabricating! Would not you for once sit up till morning to see the destruction of the pyramid and distribution of the

Letter 1859. — [1] Henrietta (d. 1796), daughter of John Bannister, and wife of Hon. and Rev. Brownlow North, at this time Bishop of Worcester.

materials? Do not mention this, for I did not take the girl, and she still assists at the daily and nightly revolutions of Babel.

On Tuesday I supped after the Opera at Mrs. Meynel's with a set of the most fashionable company, which, take notice, I very seldom do now, as I certainly am not of the age to mix often with young people. Lady Melbourne was standing before the fire, and adjusting her feathers in the glass, says she, 'Lord! they say the stocks will blow up: that will be very comical.'

These would be features for comedy, if they would not be thought caricatures, but to-day I am possessed of a genuine paper, that I believe I shall leave to the Museum, and which, though its object will, I suppose, to-morrow become record, cannot be believed authentic an hundred years hence. It would in such a national satire as *Gulliver* be deemed too exaggerated. In short, Lord Foley and his brother have petitioned the House of Lords to set aside their father's will, as it seems he intended to have raised an hundred thousand pounds to pay their debts, but died before he could execute his intention. All the Ladies Melbournes and all the bishops' wives that kill their servants by vigils are going about the town lamenting these poor orphans, and soliciting the peers to redress their grievances; but no words, no ridicule, can attain to the ridiculous pathetic of the printed case itself, which now lies before me, and of which the four first lines are these—upon my honour they are exactly these:—

'The present Lord Foley and his brother Mr. Edward Foley having contracted large bond debts to the amount of about —*l.*, and encumbered themselves by granting annuities for their lives to the amount of about seventeen thousand four hundred and fifty pounds a *year*, explained their situation to their father the late Lord ——.'

Poor unfortunate children! before thirty, the eldest had spent an estate (to the possession of which he was not arrived) of twenty thousand a year; at least, forfeited his father's affections, who left him but six thousand a year and a palace; and the youngest brother had been dipped in the same extravagance with him, and the legislature is desired to set aside so just a punishment, and if it does will deserve that every lad in England should waste his father's estate before his face. Tell it not in Gath, where all the shekels that ever were in the country would give no idea of the debt, though Jews are the creditors! Burn your sermon instead of printing it. Do you think you can preach up to the enormities of the times? Hyperbole is baffled, and if the fine ladies of Jerusalem were so gallant that the prophets were obliged to pass all bounds of decency in censuring Duchess Aholah and Countess Aholibah, where would they have found figures even in Eastern rhetoric to paint the enormity of two sons *explaining to their father* that they paid seventeen thousand pounds a year to usurers for money they had borrowed to pay gaming debts? and what tropes, what metaphors drawn from asses would describe a Sanhedrim that suffered such a petition to be laid before it?

These have been my collections in a single fortnight in the flagrancy of a civil war. History shall not revert to Athens for decrees against diverting the revenues of the theatre to the service of the state. London shall be the storehouse hereafter, whence declamations shall be drawn on the infatuation of falling empires. Nay, so potent is the intoxication, that in two companies this evening I have been thought singular for seeing *this petition* in the light I do: at York perhaps I may not be held so antediluvian in my opinions. With such obsolete prejudices I certainly am not very proper at modern suppers, yet with such *entremets*

one would not wholly miss them. Nations at the acme of their splendour, or at the eve of their destruction, are worth observing. When they grovel in obscurity afterwards, they furnish neither events nor reflections; strangers visit the vestiges of the Acropolis, or may come to dig for capitals among the ruins of St. Paul's; but nobody studies the manners of the pedlars and banditti, that dwell in mud huts within the precincts of a demolished temple. Curio and Clodius are memorable as they paved the way to the throne of Cæsar, but equal scoundrels are not entitled to infamy after a constitution is overturned. What we shall retain, I do not conjecture. The constitution might recover —the nation cannot; but though its enemies have miscarried in their attacks on the former, is there sense or virtue enough left to restore it, though the assailants have betrayed such wretched, despicable incapacity? Unless sudden inspiration should seize the whole island, and make it with one voice invite Dr. Franklin to come over and new-model the Government, it will crumble away in the hands that still hold it. They feel, they own their insufficiency. Everybody is sensible of it, and everybody seems to think, like Lady Melbourne, that if we are blown up it will be very comical.

1860. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, May 15, 1778.

I have gulped my anger at your silence, or at least adjourned it till I have less disposition to speak, that I may chat with you on all that has happened since I wrote last Saturday. The first thing I heard on landing in Arlington Street was Lord Chatham's death, which in truth I thought of no great consequence, but to himself; for either he would have remained where he was, or been

fetched out to do what he could not do,—replace us once more on the throne of Neptune. The House of Commons has chosen to make his death an epoch, which is to draw the line between our prosperity and adversity. They bury him, and father his children. In this fit of gratitude two men chose not to be involved, but voted against attending his funeral; one was the Archbishop of Canterbury [1], who owed the tiara to him; the other, Lord Onslow, who formerly used to wait in the lobby to help him on with his great-coat.

Yesterday teemed with events: a compromise on the Irish bills [2] was made and broken. Then Sir George Saville moved for taking off pressures from the Roman Catholics, which charmed every soul on both sides; and I suppose the Papists will soon be admitted *ad eundem.*

Next arrived General Burgoyne. I don't know whether he was surprised or not, but he received a prohibition of appearing at court; and a Board of General Officers is appointed to sit on his conduct. Luckily we have enough to spare, though French and Spaniards should land in twenty places; for next came an account of Marshal Broglio being appointed Commander-in-Chief on the coasts of the ocean. The *ubi* of the Toulon squadron is not ascertained. That of Brest has thirty frigates, and the Spanish ten thousand men on board, so you may prophesy at your pleasure.

I say nothing of an interlude which nobody has leisure to think on, and is a great way off in a certain little empire we have, or had, called India, where Mr. Hastings [3]

LETTER 1860.—[1] Dr. Cornwallis.

[2] Bills by which it was proposed to remove some of the restrictions on Irish trade.

[3] Warren Hastings (1732–1818), at this time Governor-General of India. The events referred to took place early in 1777, when Hastings heard that his agents in London had handed in his resignation. On learning this, General Clavering, the Commander-in-Chief, assumed the office of Governor-General, and demanded the keys of Fort William.

had deposed General Clavering by the plenitude of his power before the latter's death.

I thought these accidents were sufficient for one week, and came out of town this morning as tranquilly as if I were a minister; so I hold my own philosophy full as high as any stoic in Yorkshire. It does require some command of temper to sit still and see a general wreck approaching,—I mean for one that expects and thinks on it. I know I might go to Ranelagh, and Newmarket, and exhibitions, and say, with Pope,

Whatever is, is right.

But I am forced to seek other consolations; and as I have not the spirits of youth, I have recourse to age, and comfort myself that my time cannot be long whether I survive my country or the constitution, the former of which is alternately shaken or attempted to be propped by experiments on the latter; but it is idle to dream on old maxims. A great convulsion is at hand, and new eras find new levels. Old folks should not trouble themselves with great epochs at the end of their lives, but set themselves apart till they are swept to the ancient mass to which they belonged.

I have long taken my doctor's degree in Strulbruggism, and wonder I concern myself about the affairs of the living. Good night! I will go and converse with the dead.

1861. To the Rev. William Cole.

Arlington Street, May 21, 1778.

I will not flatter you; I was not in the least amused with either Simon, Simeon, or William of Wyrcestre. If there was anything tolerable in either, it was the part

Hastings refused to give them up. The dispute was referred to arbitration, and decided in favour of Hastings. Clavering died shortly afterwards.

omitted, or the part I did not read, which was the journey to Jerusalem, about which I have not the smallest curiosity. I thank you for mentioning the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which I sent for.

Mr. Essex has called upon me, and left a drawing of a bridge, with which I am perfectly pleased—but I was unluckily out of town, he left no direction, and I know not where to seek him in this overgrown bottle of hay. I still hope he will call again before his return.

May not I, should not I, wish you joy on the restoration of Popery? I expect soon to see Capucins tramping about the streets, and Jesuits *in high places*. We are relapsing fast to our pristine state, and have nothing but our island, and our old religion.

Mr. Nasmith's[1] publication directed me to his catalogue of the MSS. in Bennet Library, which I did not know was printed. I found two or three from which I should be glad to have transcripts, and would willingly pay for; but I left the book at Strawberry, and must trouble you another time with that commission.

The City wants to bury Lord Chatham in St. Paul's, which, as a person said to me this morning, would literally be *robbing Peter to pay Paul*. I wish it could be so, that there might be some decoration in that nudity, *en attendant* the re-establishment of various altars.

It is not my design to purchase the new edition of the *Biographia*; I trust they will give the old purchasers the additions as a supplement. I had corrected the errata of the press throughout my copy, but I could not take the trouble of transcribing them, nor could lend them the original; as I am apt to scribble notes in the margins of all my books that interest me at all.

Pray let me know if Baker's life is among the additions,

LETTER 1861.—[1] Rev. James Nasmith (1740–1808), antiquary.

and whether you are satisfied with it, as there could not be events enough in his retired life to justify two accounts of it.

There are no new *old news*, and you care for nothing within the memory of man. I am always intending to draw up an account of my intercourse with Chatterton, which I take very kindly your reminding me of; but some avocation or other has still prevented it. My perfect innocence of having, even indirectly, been an ingredient in his dismal fate, which happened two years after our correspondence, and after he had exhausted both his resources and constitution, have made it more easy to prove that I never saw him, knew nothing of his ever being in London, and was the first person, instead of the last, on whom he had practised his impositions, and founded his chimeric hopes of promotion. My very first, or at least second letter, undeceived him in those views, and our correspondence was broken off before he quitted his master, business, and Bristol —so that his disappointment with me was but his first ill success; and he resented my incredulity so much, that he never condescended to let me see him. Indeed, what I have said now to you, and which cannot be controverted by a shadow of a doubt, would be sufficient vindication. I could only add to the proofs, a vain regret of never having known his distresses, which his amazing genius would have tempted me to relieve, though I fear he had no other claim to compassion. Mr. Warton has said enough to open the eyes of every one, that is not greatly prejudiced, to his forgeries. Dr. Milles is one, who will not make a bow to Dr. Percy, for not being as wilfully blind as himself—but when he gets a beam in his eye that he takes for an antique truth, there is no persuading him to submit to be couched. Adieu! dear Sir.

Yours most sincerely,

Hor. Walpole.

1862. To William Barrett [1].

I am far from determined to publish anything about Chatterton. It would almost look like making myself a party. I do not love controversy. If I print, my chief reason would be that both in the account of the poems, and in Mr. Warton's last volume, my name has been brought in with so little circumspection and accuracy, that it looks as if *my* rejection of Chatterton had driven him to despair; whereas I was the first person on whom he essayed his art and ambition, instead of being the last. I never saw him; there was an interval of near two years between his application to me, and his dismal end; nor had he quitted his master, nor was necessitous, nor otherwise poor than attornies' clerks are, nor had he come to London, nor launched into dissipation, when his correspondence with me stopped.

As faithfully as I can recollect the circumstances, without dates and without searching for what few memorandums I preserved relative to him, I will recapitulate his history with me.

Bathoe, my bookseller, brought me a packet left with him. It contained an ode, or little poem of two or three stanzas *in alternate rhyme*, on the death of Richard the 1st, and I was told in very few lines that it had been found at Bristol with many other old poems; and that the possessor could furnish me with accounts of a series of great painters that had flourished at Bristol.

Here I must pause, to mention my own reflections. At

Letter 1862.—Not in C.; reprinted from Lord Orford's *Works* (1798), vol. iv. pp. 220–7.

[1] William Barrett (1733–1789), a Bristol surgeon, author of a *History of Bristol* published in 1789. Barrett was thoroughly deceived by Chatterton's forgeries. He became acquainted with him, and Chatterton supplied many documents and drawings which were accepted by Barrett and embodied in his *History*.

first I concluded that somebody, having met with my *Anecdotes of Painting*, had a mind to laugh at me, I thought not very ingeniously, as I was not likely to swallow a succession of great painters at Bristol. The ode, or sonnet, as I think it was called, was too pretty to be part of the plan; and as is easy with all the other supposed poems of Rowley, it was not difficult to make it very modern by changing the old words for new; though yet more difficult than with most of them—you see, I tell you fairly the case. I then imagined, and do still, that the success of Ossian's poems had suggested the idea. Whether the transmitter hinted, or I supposed from the subject, that the discovered treasure was of the age of Richard the 1st, I cannot take upon me to assert—yet that impression was so strong on my mind, that two years after, when Dr. Goldsmith told me they were then allotted to the age of Henry IV or V, I said with surprise, 'They have shifted the date extremely.' This is no evidence—but there is one line in the printed poems of Rowley that makes me more firmly believe that the age of Richard the 1st was the era fixed upon by Chatterton for his forgeries, for that line says,

Now is Cœur de Lion gone—

or some such words, for I quote by memory, not having the book at hand. It is very improbable that Rowley, writing in the reign of Henry VI, or Edward IV, as is now pretended, or in that of Henry IV, as was assigned by the credulous before they had digested their system, should incidentally in a poem on another subject say, *now* is Richard dead. I am persuaded that Chatterton himself, before he had dived into Canning's history, had fixed on a much earlier period for the age of his forgeries.—Now I return to my narrative.

I wrote, according to the enclosed direction, for farther

particulars. Chatterton, in answer, informed me that he was the son of a poor widow, who supported him with great difficulty; that he was clerk or apprentice to an attorney, but had a taste and turn for more elegant studies; and hinted a wish that I would assist him with my interest in emerging out of so dull a profession, by procuring him some place, in which he could pursue his natural bent. He affirmed that great treasures of ancient poetry had been discovered in his native city, and were in the hands of a person, who had lent him those he had transmitted to me; for he now sent me others, amongst which was an absolute modern pastoral in dialogue, thinly sprinkled with old words. Pray observe, Sir, that he affirmed having received the poems from another person; whereas it is ascertained that the gentleman at Bristol who possesses the fund of Rowley's poems, received them from Chatterton.

I wrote to a relation of mine at Bath to inquire into the situation and character of Chatterton according to his own account of himself: nothing was returned about his character, but his own story was verified.

In the meantime I communicated the poems to Mr. Gray and Mr. Mason, who at once pronounced them forgeries, and declared there was no symptom in them of their being the productions of near so distant an age; the language and metres being totally unlike anything ancient; for though I no doubt to them ascribed them to the time of Richard I, Mr. Gray nor Mr. Mason saw anything in the poems that was not more recent than even the reign of Henry VIII. And here let me remark how incredible it is that Rowley, a monk of a mere commercial town, which was all Bristol then was, should have purified the language and introduced a diversified metre more classic than was known to that polished courtly poet, Lord Surry; and this in the barbarous turbulent times of Henry VI, and that

the whole nation should have relapsed into the same barbarism of style and versification, till Lord Surry, I might almost say, till Waller arose. I leave to better scholars and better antiquaries to settle how Rowley became so well versed in the Greek tragedians. He was as well acquainted with Butler, or Butler with him, for a chaplain of the late Bishop of Exeter has found in Rowley a line of *Hudibras.*

Well, Sir, being satisfied with my intelligence about Chatterton, I wrote him a letter with as much kindness and tenderness as if I had been his guardian; for though I had no doubt of his impositions, such a spirit of poetry breathed in his coinage, as interested me for him; nor was it a grave crime in a young bard to have forged false notes of hand that were to pass current only in the parish of Parnassus. I undeceived him about my being a person of any interest, and urged to him, that in duty and gratitude to his mother, who had straitened herself to breed him up to a profession, he ought to labour in it, that in her old age he might absolve his filial debt; and I told him, that when he should have made a fortune, he might unbend himself with the studies consonant to his inclinations. I told him also, that I had communicated his transcripts to much better judges, and that they were by no means satisfied with the authenticity of his supposed MSS. I mentioned their reasons, particularly that there were no such metres known in the age of Richard I—and that might be a reason with Chatterton himself to shift the era of his productions.

He wrote me rather a peevish answer, said he could not contest with a person of my learning (a compliment by no means due to me, and which I certainly had not assumed, having mentioned my having consulted abler judges), maintained the genuineness of the poems, and demanded to have

them returned, as they were the property of another gentleman. Remember this.

When I received this letter, I was going to Paris in a day or two, and either forgot his request of the poems, or, perhaps not having time to have them copied, deferred complying till my return, which was to be in six weeks. I protest I do not remember which was the case; and yet, though in a cause of so little importance, I will not utter a syllable of which I am not positively certain; nor will charge my memory with a tittle beyond what it retains.

Soon after my return from France, I received another letter from Chatterton, the style of which was singularly impertinent. He demanded his poems roughly; and added, that I should not have dared to use him so ill, if he had not acquainted me with the narrowness of his circumstances.

My heart did not accuse me of insolence to him. I wrote an answer, expostulating with him on his injustice, and renewing good advice—but upon second thoughts, reflecting that so wrong-headed a young man, of whom I knew nothing, and whom I had never seen, might be absurd enough to print my letter, I flung it into the fire; and wrapping up both his poems and letters, without taking a copy of either, for which I am now sorry, I returned all to him, and thought no more of him or them, till about a year and a half after, when dining at the Royal Academy, Dr. Goldsmith drew the attention of the company with an account of a marvellous treasure of ancient poems lately discovered at Bristol, and expressed enthusiastic belief in them; for which he was laughed at by Dr. Johnson, who was present. I soon found this was the *trouvaille* of my friend Chatterton; and I told Dr. Goldsmith that this novelty was none to me, who might, if I had pleased, have had the honour of ushering the great discovery to the learned world. You may imagine, Sir, we did not at all

agree in the measure of our faith: but though his credulity diverted me, my mirth was soon dashed; for, on asking about Chatterton, he told me he had been in London, and had destroyed himself. I heartily wished then that I had been the dupe of all the poor young man had written to me; for who would not have his understanding imposed on to save a fellow being from the utmost wretchedness, despair and suicide!—and a poor young man not eighteen—and of such miraculous talents—for, dear Sir, if I wanted credulity on one hand, it is ample on the other. Yet heap all the improbabilities you please on the head of Chatterton, the impossibility on Rowley's side will remain. An amazing genius for poetry, which one of them possessed, might flash out in the darkest age—but could Rowley anticipate the phraseology of the eighteenth century? His poetic fire might burst through the obstacles of the times; like Homer or other original bards, he might have formed a poetical style—but would it have been precisely that of an age subsequent to him by some hundred years? Nobody can admire the poetry of the poems in question more than I do—but except being better than most modern verses, in what do they differ in the construction? The words are old, the construction evidently of yesterday; and by substituting modern words, ay, single words, to the old, or to those invented by Chatterton, in what do they differ? Try that method with any composition, even in prose of the reign of Henry VI, and see if the consequence will be the same. But I am getting into the controversy, instead of concluding my narrative, which indeed is ended.

You seem to think Chatterton might have assistance—I don't know but he might; but one of the wonderful parts of his prodigious story is, that he had formed disciples—yes, at eighteen. Some of his youthful companions have continued to walk in his paths, and have produced Saxon

and other poems of antique cast; but not with the poetic spirit of their master; nor can it be discovered that Chatterton received instruction or aid from any man of learning or abilities. Dr. P.[2] and Mr. L. have collected everything relating to him that can be traced, and all tends to concentre the forgery of Rowley's poems in his single person. They have numerous pieces of Chatterton's writing in various ways—nay, so versatile, so extensive, so commanding was his genius, that he forged architecture and heraldry; that is, could invent both in art and in folly. In short, I do not believe that there ever existed so master a genius, except that of Psalmanazar, who before twenty-two could create a language, that all the learned of Europe, though they suspected, could not detect.

Thus, Sir, with the most scrupulous veracity, I have told you my share in that unhappy young man's story. With more pains I could add a few dates, but the substance would be identically the same. Rowley would be a prophet, a foreseer, if the poems were his; yet in any other light he would not be so extraordinary a phenomenon as Chatterton—whom, though he was a bad man, as is said, I lament not having seen. He might at that time have been less corrupted, and my poor patronage might have saved him from the abyss into which he plunged. But, alas! how could I surmise that the well-being and existence of a human creature depended on my swallowing a legend, and from an unknown person? Thank God! so far from having anything to charge myself with on Chatterton's account, it is very hypothetical to suppose that I could have stood between him and ruin. It is one of those possible events, which we should be miserable indeed if imputable to a conscience that had not the smallest light to direct it! If I went to Bengal, I might perhaps interpose

[2] Dr. Percy.

and save the life of some poor Indian devoted by the fury of a British nabob: but amiable as such Quixotism would be, we are not to sacrifice every duty to the possibility of realizing one conscientious vision. I believe I have tired you; I am sure I have wearied my own hand, which has written these seven pages without pausing; but when anything takes possession of my mind, I forget my gouty fingers and my age—or perhaps betray the latter by my garrulity. However, it will save me more trouble—I shall certainly never write a word more about Chatterton. You are my confessor; I have unburdened my soul to you, and I trust you will not enjoin me a public penance.

Yours most sincerely,

Strawberry Hill, May 23, 1778. HORACE WALPOLE.

POSTSCRIPT.

I recollect another passage that I must add. A gentleman of rank, being struck with the beauty of the poems, and believing their antique originality, purchased a copy of them, and showed it to me. I expressed my doubts—'Now then,' said the person, 'I will convince you: here is a painter's bill that you cannot question. What think you, now?' 'This,' I replied, 'I do believe genuine; and I will tell you why'—and taking down the first volume of my *Anecdotes of Painting*, I showed him the identic bill printed some years before. 'This,' said I, 'I know is ancient: Vertue transcribed it twenty years ago from some old parchments in the church of St. Mary Ratcliffe at Bristol.' *That* was the origin of Chatterton's list of great painters—and probably of his other inventions. Can it be supposed that Vertue should have seen that old bill, and with his inquisitive and diligent turn, especially about painters, not have inquired whether there was nothing more? Vertue was even a versifier, as I have many proofs in his MSS., and searched much after Chaucer and Lidgate,

of whom he engraved portraits—yet all Rowley's remains, it seems, were reserved for Chatterton, who it cannot be denied did forge poetry and prose for others; and who, as indubitably, was born a great poet—yet not a line of tolerable poetry in Rowley's own hand can be produced. Did Chatterton destroy the originals to authenticate their existence? He certainly wrote his forgeries on the backs of old parchments, and there is both internal and external evidence against the antiquity of the poetry—but I will not take part in that dispute. Error, like the sea, is always gaining as much territory in one place as it loses in another, and it is to little purpose to make it change possessions.

1863. To Earl Harcourt.

My dear Lord, May 26, 1778.

As the weather is as fine as it is likely to be till the summer is gone, and as you have flattered me with the honour of a visit, may I ask if Sunday or Monday next will be agreeable to your Lordship and Lady Harcourt, or what other day before you go out of town to pull [*sic*] your own house?

Your Lordship's most devoted,

H. Walpole.

P.S. If you did not give yourself inland airs, you would wait to rebuild your house, till the French had burnt it down. I trust to the talisman of King William's spurs.

1864. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, May 31, 1778.

I am glad you have deigned to answer me at last, for there is no conversation when only one talks. I was almost sorry that I had not begged you to order your

executor to send me word you was dead, and that I need not write any more. But, my good friend, you are full as great a contradiction as Lord John[1], or any Catholic Whig upon earth. You write once in a quarter, and yet complain of my small paper. I fixed upon this little quarto for substantial reasons. I am too apt to write too much to those I love, and prescribed myself this size that I might not weary them, and it holds all one has to say to those one loves not, and yet seems to contain a decent quantity.

I should like to accept the assignation[2] you give me, and will if I have the least encouragement, but I have had no invitation; and though I do not at all know why, am a little suspicious of not being in the most perfect favour. As this is by no means positive, I take no notice, because it is not at all on my side, and that it shall revive whenever it pleases, as my regard is just the same. If we should not meet I think you cannot refuse coming to me for a few days. Consider, I have turned that corner beyond which every hour is *lucrum*, and that I and everybody else think I have lived long enough; though I am not so old as Sam Martin[3] counts me. The talisman is removed that prohibited your access to this part of the world, though surely Twickenham is a kind of country to so near a relation of Pope as you are by the side of your Virgin-Mothers. Let me have the satisfaction of seeing you here, whither very few are pressed to come. We have a thousand things to talk over, and are almost reduced to be the only two of the same opinion; for what those you call your friends mean, indeed I do not guess—it is most charitable to think they have no meaning. I used to fancy that calamity would

Letter 1864.—[1] On May 13, 1778, Lord John Cavendish moved to address the King to settle a permanent fortune on the earldom of Chatham. Mason, in a letter, expressed surprise at this action on the part of one who, with his family, had always disliked Lord Chatham.

[2] At Nuneham.

[3] Martin had the reversion of Horace Walpole's place as Usher of the Exchequer.

bring us to our senses—it must bring our senses too. The two alternatives now are desolation, or a shameful peace: bankruptcy with either, only a little nearer, or a little farther off. It is actually come out on the agitation of the changes in the law, that at 60*l.* per commission, the Chancellor reaped seven thousand pounds last year by bankruptcies! Those changes were to have taken place last Thursday, but I do not hear they did. Thurlow is to be Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper, I do not know which[4]. Wedderburn sits down with the Attorney's place, a disappointment and I suppose a full promise. Norton threatened to impeach him if peered, for telling the Chief Justice[5] that Lord North would pay him out of the Treasury seven thousand pounds for the prothonotary's reversion. Thus justice makes a rope of one rogue, instead of using two ropes.

I shall certainly not go to the funeral. I go to no puppet-shows, nor want to see Lord Chatham's water-gall Lord Temple hobble chief mourner. I scarce inquire after the House of Commons, which is a scene of folly and Billingsgate. Burgoyne has tried to be the pathetic hero, and was forgotten for three hours, while Temple Luttrell and Lord G. Germaine scolded like two oyster-women: the first tried to be sent to Newgate, and the latter grasped his sword, and then asked pardon for having been grossly affronted. Lord Barrington implored Madam his Country's tears for declaring he was retiring from her service to virtuous privacy[6]. It is a pity she did not order him to be buried at the public expense. Lord Sandwich has run the gauntlet in the Lords for all the lies he has told all the winter about the fleet, and does not retire; but I am sick of repeating what you must be sick of reading. An invasion will have

[4] Thurlow became Lord Chancellor.

[5] Sir William de Grey.

[6] Lord Barrington retired from the post of Secretary at War in the following December.

some dignity; but to see a great country gambol at the eve of ruin like a puppy on a precipice! Oh, one cannot buffoon like Lucian when one wants to speak daggers like Tacitus, and couch them in a sentence without descending to details.

I had rather talk on less interesting subjects, and will tell you a good *bon mot*. *Marie à la Coque*[7] has had an outrageous quarrel with Miss Pelham on politics, or rather at Miss Pelham, who did not reply. This occasioned Lady Mary's notes being mentioned, which she signs as Duchess of York, 'Maryc' (the *c* passing for a flourish), if you do not go to law with her. On this, Burke said to Miss P., 'Upon my word you will be a match for her if you sign "Frances P."'

There was more humour in a reply of Lady Harrington's t'other day. Mrs. St. John had asked Lady Anna Maria[8] to a ball without her mother, who would not let her go. The next time they met Lady Harrington made excuses, but said she never allowed her daughter to go to balls without her. Mrs. St. John replied, as her Ladyship suffered her to go to the Opera without her, she had hoped she would not have been more strict about a private dancing. Instead of knocking her down, as might have been expected, Lady Harrington looked her all over, and then, with a face melted to compassion, said in a soft voice, and very slowly, 'Mrs. St. John, if you *could* have a child, I am sure you would think as I do!' Imagine this addressed to a porpoise covered with flowers and feathers!

[7] Lady Mary Coke. Marie Alacoque, a native of Burgundy, born in 1645; entered the convent of the Visitation de Ste Marie de Paray-le-Monial in 1671; died in 1690. She was an enthusiast and a visionary. This, together with the similarity of sound, led Horace Walpole to speak of Lady Mary Coke under that name, she being also given to visions and enthusiasms, though not, however, of a religious sort.

[8] Lady Anna Maria Stanhope, fifth daughter of second Earl of Harrington; m. (1782) Thomas Pelham-Clinton, Earl of Lincoln, afterwards third Duke of Newcastle; d. 1834.

But I would in vain divert you, I do not feel cheerful, though, as I told you in a former letter, I had rather see my country humbled than insolently enslaved. Nay, I think with comfort on a time which I shall not see, when the absurdity of the present age will be painted in its true colours. The mind never rests on the unhappy point: it prefers a non-existent scene to disagreeable sensations. I feel my own folly. Were I to leave England as happy or as glorious as I have known it, would it always remain so? Is not it enough that the mischief is falling on the heads of its authors? What period equalled the disgraces of the last six or eight months? Shall the innocent mix sighs with the guilty? Who will doubt where the blame is due? All the Robertsons and Humes of the Highlands cannot whitewash the four last years; nor, which is more delightful, can they plunder and disgrace America, as their chiefs have undone England. Seven James's were not worse politicians than the whole nation is; nor is there a more indelible mark of reprobation on the Jews. I would fain persuade myself that the seeds of tyranny will not thrive in this country, though all the inhabitants sow them. Every attempt chokes the seedsman: I hope we shall be a proverb, as Ireland is, for not producing venomous animals!

Remember that if I write on small paper I write a very small hand, and that this very letter would make forty, if I scrawled a large character like dukes and old earls, who allow as much room to every word as to their coach-and-six. I don't want news, but you can say nothing that I shall not be glad to read.

1865. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, May 31, 1778.

I am forced to look at the dates I keep of my letters, to see what events I have or have not told you; for at this crisis something happens every day; though nothing very striking since the death of Lord Chatham, with which I closed my last. No?—yes, but there has. All England, that had abandoned him, found out, the moment his eyes were closed, that nothing but Lord Chatham could have preserved them. How lucky for him that the experiment cannot be made! Grief is fond, and grief is generous. The Parliament will bury him; the City begs the honour of being his grave; and the important question is not yet decided, whether he is to lie at Westminster or in St. Paul's; on which it was well said, that it would be 'robbing Peter to pay Paul.' An annuity of four thousand pounds is settled on the title of Chatham, and twenty thousand pounds allotted to pay his debts. The opposition and the administration disputed zeal; and neither care a straw about him. He is already as much forgotten as John of Gaunt.

General Burgoyne[1] has succeeded and been the topic, and for two days engrossed the attention of the House of Commons; and probably will be heard of no more. He was even forgotten for three hours while he was on the *tapis*, by a violent quarrel between Temple Luttrell (a brother of the Duchess of Cumberland) and Lord George Germaine; but the public has taken affection for neither them nor the General: being much more disposed at present to hate than to love—except the dead. It will be

Letter 1865.—[1] General Burgoyne appeared in the House on May 26, when he gave an account of his conduct.

well if the ill-humour, which increases, does not break out into overt acts.

I know not what to say of war. The Toulon squadron was certainly blown back. That of Brest is supposed to be destined to invade some part of this country or Ireland; or rather, it is probable, will attempt our fleet. In my own opinion, there is no great alacrity in France—I mean, in the court of France—for war; and, as we have had time for great preparations, their eagerness will not increase. We shall suffer as much as they can desire by the loss of America, without their risk, and in few years shall be able to give them no umbrage; especially as our frenzy is still so strong, that, if France left us at quiet, I am persuaded we should totally exhaust ourselves in pursuing the vision of reconquest. Spain continues to disclaim hostility, as you told me. If the report is true of revolts in Mexico, they would be as good as a bond under his Catholic Majesty's hand.

We shall at least not doze, as we are used to do, in summer. The Parliament is to have only short adjournments; and our senators, instead of retiring to horse-races (*their* plough), are all turned soldiers, and disciplining militia. Camps everywhere, and the ladies in the uniform of their husbands! In short, if the dose is not too strong, a little adversity would not be quite unseasonable.—A little! you will cry; why what do you call the loss of America? Oh, my dear Sir, do you think a capital as enormous as London has its nerves affected by what happens beyond the Atlantic? What has become of all your reading? There is nothing so unnatural as the feelings of a million of persons that live together in one city. They have not one conception like those in villages and in the country. They presume or despond from quite different motives. They have both more sense and less, than those

who are not in contact with a multitude. Wisdom forms empires, but folly dissolves them; and a great capital, that dictates to the rest of the community, is always the last to perceive the decays of the whole, because it takes its own greatness for health[2].

Lord Holdernesse[3] is dead; not quite so considerable a personage as he once expected to be, though nature never intended him for anything that he was. The Chancellor[4], another child of Fortune, quits the Seals; and they are, or are to be, given to the Attorney-General, Thurlow, whom nobody will reproach with want of abilities.

As the Parliament will rise on Tuesday, you will not expect my letters so frequently as of late, especially if hostilities do not commence. In fact, our newspapers tell you everything faster than I can: yet I write, because you have more faith in my intelligence; yet all its merit consists in my not telling you fables. I hear no more than everybody does, but I send you only what is sterling; or, at least, give you reports for no more than they are worth. I believe Sir John Dick is much more punctual, and hears more; but, till you displace me, I shall execute my office of being your gazetteer.

1866. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, June 3, 1778.

I will not dispute with you, dear Sir, on patriots and politics. One point is past controversy, that the ministers have ruined this country; and if the Church of England is satisfied with being reconciled to the Church of Rome, and

[2] When Constantinople was taken by Mahomet II, the whole empire of the East had long been reduced to the capital itself. *Walpole.*

[3] Robert Darcy, last Earl of Holdernesse, had been Ambassador, Secretary of State, and Governor to George, Prince of Wales. *Walpole.*

[4] Earl Bathurst.

thinks it a compensation for the loss of America and all credit in Europe, she is as silly an old woman as any granny in an almshouse. France is very glad we are grown such fools, and soon saw that the Presbyterian Dr. Franklin had more sense than all our ministers together. She has got over all her prejudices, has expelled the Jesuits, and made the Protestant Swiss, Necker, her Comptroller-General. It is a little woful, that we are relapsing into the nonsense that the rest of Europe is shaking off! and it is the more deplorable, as we know by repeated experience, that this country has always been disgraced by Tory administrations. The rubric is the only gainer by them in a few martyrs.

I do not know yet what is settled about the spot of Lord Chatham's interment. I am no more an enthusiast to his memory than you. I knew his faults and his defects —yet one great fact cannot only not be controverted, but I doubt more remarkable every day—I mean, that under him we attained not only our highest elevation, but the most solid authority in Europe. When the names of Marlborough and Chatham are still pronounced with awe in France, our little cavils make a puny sound. Nations that are beaten cannot be mistaken.

I have been looking out for your friend a set of my heads of Painters, and find I want six or seven. I think I have some odd ones in town. If I have not, I will have deficiencies supplied from the plates; though I fear they will not be good, as so many have been taken off. I should be very ungrateful for all your kindnesses, if I neglected any opportunity of obliging you, dear Sir. Indeed, our old and unalterable friendship is creditable to us both, and very uncommon between two men who differ so very much in their opinions relative to Church and State. I believe the reason is, that we are both sincere, and never meant to

make advantage by our principles, which I allow is too common on both sides, and I own, too, fairly, more common on my side of the question than on yours. There is a reason, too, for that: the honours and emoluments are in the gift of the crown: the nation has no separate treasury to reward its friends.

If Mr. Tyrwhit has opened his eyes to Chatterton's forgeries, there is an instance of conviction against strong prejudice! I have drawn up an account[1] of my transaction with that marvellous young man. You shall see it one day or other, but I do not intend to print it. I have taken a thorough dislike to being an author; and if it would not look like begging you to compliment me, by contradicting me, I would tell you, what I am most seriously convinced of, that I find what small share of parts I had, grown dulled—and when I perceive it myself, I may well believe that others would not be less sharp-sighted. It is very natural; mine were spirits rather than parts; and as time has rebated the one, it must surely destroy their resemblance to the other.—Pray don't say a syllable in reply on this head, or I shall have done exactly what I said I would not do. Besides, as you have always been too partial to me, I am on my guard—and when I will not expose myself to my enemies, I must not listen to the prejudice of my friends; and as nobody is more partial to me than you, there is nobody I must trust less in that respect.

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

LETTER 1866.—[1] *A Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton*, dated May 23, 1778. (See *Works* of Lord Orford, vol. iv. p. 207.)

1867. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1778.

I am as impatient and in as much hurry as you was, dear Sir, to clear myself from the slightest intention of censuring your politics. I know the sincerity and disinterested goodness of your heart, and when I must be convinced how little certain we all are of what is truth, it would be very presumptuous to condemn the opinions of any good man, and still less an old and unalterable friend, as I have ever found you. The destruction that violent and arbitrary principles have drawn on this blinded country has moved my indignation. We never were a great and happy country till the Revolution. The system of these days tended to overturn, and has overturned, that establishment, and brought on the disgraces that ever attended the foolish and wicked councils of the house of Stuart. If man is a rational being, he has a right to make use of his reason, and to enjoy his liberty. We, we alone almost, had a constitution that every other nation upon earth envied or ought to envy. This is all I contend for. I will give you up whatever descriptions of men you please, that is, the leaders of parties, not the principles. These cannot change, those generally do, when power falls into the hands of them or their party; because men are corruptible, which truth is not. But the more the leaders of a party dedicated to liberty are apt to change, the more I adore the principle, because it shows that extent of power is not to be trusted even with those that are the most sensible of the blessing of liberty. Man is a domineering animal; and it has been not only my principle, but practice, too, to quit everybody at the gate of the palace. I trust we shall not much differ on these outlines, but we will bid adieu to the subject: it is

never an agreeable one to those who do not mean to make a trade of it.

I heartily wish you may not find the pontiff what I think the order, and what I know him, if you mean the high-priest of Ely[1]. He is all I have been describing, and worse: and I have too good an opinion of you, to believe that he will ever serve you.

What I said of disclaiming authorship by no means alluded to Mr. Baker's life. It would be enough that you desire it, for me to undertake it. Indeed, I am inclined to it because he was what you and I are, a party-man from principle, not from interest: and he, who was so candid, surely is entitled to the strictest candour. You shall send me your papers whenever you please. If I can succeed to your satisfaction, I shall be content; though I do assure you there was no affectation in my saying that I find my small talent decline. I shall write the life to oblige you, without any thoughts of publication, unless I am better pleased than I expect to be; and even then not in my own life. I had rather show that I am sensible of my own defects, and that I have acquired judgement enough not to hope praise for my writings; for surely when they are not obnoxious, and one only leaves them behind one, it is a mark that one is not very vain of them.

I have found the whole set of my *Painters*, and will send them the first time I go to town; and I will have my paper on Chatterton transcribed for you, though I am much chagrined at your giving me no hope of seeing you again here. I will not say more of it: for, while it is in my power, I will certainly make you a visit now and then, if there is no other way of our meeting. Mr. Tyrwhit, I hear, has actually published an appendix, in which he gives up Rowley. I have not seen it, but will. Shall

LETTER 1867.—[1] Dr. Edmund Keene.

I beg you to transcribe the passage in which Dr. Kippis abuses my father and me? for I shall not buy the new edition [2], only to purchase abuse on me and mine. I may be angry at liberties he takes with Sir Robert, but not with myself: I shall rather take it as flattery to be ranked with him; though there can be nothing worse said of my father than to place us together. Oh, that great, that good man! Dr. Kippis may as well throw a stone at the sun!

I am sorry you have lost poor Mr. Bentham [3]. Will you say a civil thing for me to his widow, if she is living, and you think it not improper? I have not forgotten their great kindness to me. Pray send me your paper on Mr. Prior's generosity [4] to Mr. Baker. I am sorry it was not so. Prior is much a favourite with me, *though a Tory*, nor did I ever hear anything ill of him. He left his party, but not his friends, and seems to me to have been very amiable. Do you know I pretend to be very impartial sometimes? Mr. Hollis [5] wrote against me for not being Whig enough. I am offended at Mrs. Macaulay for being too much a Whig.—In short, we are all silly animals, and scarce ever more so than when we affect sense.

Yours ever,

H. W.

1868. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, June 16, 1778.

As I have just received yours of May 30th, I will begin to answer it, though I wrote to you on the first of this

[2] Of the *Biographia Britannica*.

[3] Joseph Bentham, Printer to the University of Cambridge.

[4] The author of the life of Baker in the *Biographia Britannica* stated that Prior handed over to Baker the income derived from the fellowship held by him at St. John's College, Cambridge. This statement was subsequently contradicted.

[5] Thomas Hollis (1720–1774), noted for his Whiggism.

month, and think I shall not have enough additional to fill a whole letter yet.

The public imagined there would have been some changes on the rising of the Parliament; but they began and ended in the law, and with bestowing the three vacant Garters[1]. The Toulon squadron is certainly gone to America; if to Boston, it is possible with the immediate view only of getting sailors and two ships that are building there for France. If they can resist the temptation of burning Halifax, attacking Lord Howe, or the West Indies, they are as great philosophers as Sir William Howe, who has twice gazed at General Washington. The last account from that quarter had a little spirit in it; they have burnt above forty American sloops and fry in the Delaware. For these last days there have been rumours of disposition in the Americans to treat; but they do not gain much credit. Admiral Byron is sailed to America, and Admiral Keppel is at sea. At home we are spread with camps. This is all that amounts to facts, or to the eggs of facts. Sir William Howe is expected in a week or ten days. As the Parliament is not sitting, that topic may be suspended. Next we are to await the news of the reception of the Commissioners; perhaps, their return. It would be easy to dilate reflections on all this suspense; but I do not write to display my sagacity, but to inform you.

I should be sorry your nephew protracted his return, but as you will have the comfort of seeing him again. It will be one in the present situation of your country.

The meteor of the reading world is dead, Voltaire. That throne is quite vacant. We shall see whether his old friend of Prussia[2] maintains that of war, or cedes it to a young Cæsar[3]. He seems to me to be aiming at a more artful

LETTER 1868.—[1] On the Earls of Rochford and Suffolk, and on Viscount Weymouth.

[2] Frederick II. *Walpole.*

[3] The Emperor Joseph II. *Walpole.*

crown—that of policy; and, in all probability, will attain it; at least, I am not much prejudiced yet in favour of his competitor. It is from beyond the Atlantic that the world, perhaps, will see genius revive. They seem to set out with a politeness with which few empires have commenced. We have not shown ourselves quite so civilized. We hectored and called names, talked fire and sword, but have made more use of the first than of the second. Our generals beg to be tried, and our ministers not to be tried. This does not sound well when translated into other languages. For my part, who hold that Chance has much more to do in the affairs of the world than Wisdom, I wait to see what the first will ordain. This belief is a sovereign preservative against despondency. There have been very gloomy moments in my life; but experience has shown me, either that events do not correspond to appearances, or that I have very little shrewdness; and therefore I can resign the honour of my penetration with satisfaction, when my foresight augurs ill. If Lord Chatham knew that he should conquer the world, or Dr. Franklin that he should reduce us lower than Lord Chatham found us, I should respect their penetration indeed! But, without detracting from their spirit or abilities, I do not believe the first expected half the success he met with, or the latter half the incapacity that has been exerted against, and, consequently, for him.

London, Friday, 19th.

I came to town to-day for a moment, but do not hear a word to add. Great events, should there be any, you may trust I shall send you the first moment I hear them. I shall not write, only to say I know nothing; and so little happens in summer, but military adventures, that one's letters are mere descriptions of want of matter.

1869. To the Countess of Ailesbury.

Strawberry Hill, June 25, 1778.

I am quite astonished, Madam, at not hearing of Mr. Conway's being returned! What is he doing? Is he revolting and setting up for himself, like our nabobs in India? or is he forming Jersey[1], Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark, into the united provinces in the compass of a silver penny? I should not wonder if this was to be the fate of our distracted empire, which we seem to have made so large, only that it might afford to split into separate kingdoms. I told Mr. C. I should not write any more, concluding he would not stay a twinkling; and your Ladyship's last encouraged my expecting him. In truth, I had nothing to tell him if he had written.

I have been in town but one single night this age, as I could not bear to throw away this phœnix June. It has rained a good deal this morning, but only made it more delightful. The flowers are all Arabian. I have found but one inconvenience, which is the hosts of cuckoos: one would not think one was in Doctors' Commons. It is very disagreeable, that the nightingales should sing but half a dozen songs, and the other beasts squall for two months together.

Poor Mrs. Clive has been robbed again in her own lane, as she was last year, and has got the jaundice, she thinks, with the fright. I don't make a visit without a blunderbuss; so one might as well be invaded by the French. Though I live in the centre of ministers, I do not know a syllable of politics; and though within hearing of Lady Greenwich, who is but two miles off, I have not a word of news to send your Ladyship. I live like Berecynthia,

Letter 1869.—[1] General Conway was Governor of Jersey.

surrounded by nephews and nieces; yet Park Place is full as much in my mind, and I beg for its history.

Your most faithful,
Hor. Walpole.

1870. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, June 26, 1778.

Mr. Nicholls has been here, and tells me he has seen you, and that you have not been well, for which I am very sorry indeed. He says York disagreed with you, and that you will go thither no more in winter. The rest of his account was much more welcome: that you have made charming progress in your third book[1], and inserted divine lines on Gray. Them I do thirst to see, and trust I shall ere many moons have put on their nightcaps; for Lord Harcourt has asked me to meet you at Nuneham. When it is to be I don't know, for they are going or gone into Sussex; but if you can cast a figure and guess, I beg you to give me a hint, though nothing shall prevent my being faithful to that assignation, but my lord and master, gout, whose commands, however, I do not expect.

Well, the signal is fired. Admiral Keppel has had a smart skirmish with three frigates[2] of the Brest squadron, and has sent one of them in. They fired first, and yet seem to have provoked him that they may plead we began the war. I trouble myself mighty little about what their majesties, the Kings of Europe, will say on these punctilios over their coffee. We, the Achivi, are to be the sufferers, and particularly we the Achivi of these islands. In truth Agamemnon himself will be no great gainer, nor be gathered

Letter 1870.—[1] The third book of Mason's poem *The English Garden*. [2] The *Pallas*, the *Licorne*, and the *Belle Poule*. The latter escaped. The skirmish took place on June 18, 1778.

to the Atridæ with quite so many crowns on his head as they bequeathed to him, and he will wish he had not worn that of Caledonia!

I know nothing else; but what a volume in that *else*! you bards that can prophesy with the lyre in your hand have

ample scope and verge enough [3]

for pouring out odes full of calamity and of *funera Dardaniae gentis.* Distress is already felt; one hears of nothing but of the want of money; one sees it every hour. I sit in my blue window and miss nine in ten of the carriages that used to pass before it. Houses sell for nothing, which, two years ago, nabobs would have given lacks of diamonds for. Sir Gerard Vannecks's [4] house and beautiful terrace on the Thames, with forty acres of ground, and valued by his father at twenty thousand pounds, was bought in last week at six thousand. Richmond is deserted; an hundred and twenty coaches used to be counted at the church door —there are now twenty. I know nobody that grows rich but Margaret. This halcyon season has brought her more customers than ever, and were anything to happen to her, I have thoughts, like greater folk, of being my own minister, and showing my house myself. I don't wonder *your Garden* has grown in such a summer, and I am glad it has, that our taste in gardening may be immortal in verse, for I doubt it has seen its best days! Your poem may transplant it to America, whither our best works will be carried now, as our worst used to be. Do not you feel satisfied in knowing you shall be a classic in a free and rising empire? Swell all your ideas, give a loose to all your poetry; your lines will be repeated on the banks of the Oroonoko; and, which

[3] 'Give ample room, and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.'—*The Bard*, ii. 1.
[4] Second Baronet; d. 1791.

is another comfort, Ossian's dirges will never be known there. Poor Strawberry must sink *in faece Romuli*; that melancholy thought silences me. Good night!

1871. To the Rev. William Mason.

July 4, 1778.

Children break their playthings to see the inside of them. Pope thought superior beings looked on Newton but as a monkey of uncommon parts: would not he think that we have been like babies smashing an empire to see what it was made of? Truly I doubt whether there will be a whole piece left in three months: the conduct bears due proportion to the incapacity—you ought to be on the spot to believe it. When Keppel's messenger, Mr. Berkeley[1], arrived, neither the First Lord of the Admiralty[2] nor the Secretary[3] was to be found! and now Mr. Keppel is returned, we learn that the East and West India fleets, worth four millions, are at stake, and the French frigates are abroad in pursuit of them. Yesterday the merchants were with Lord North to press Keppel might sail again against a superior fleet! Forty thousand men are on the coast, and transports assembling in every port, and nothing but incapacity and inability in all this, and not a grain of treachery.

General Howe is arrived and was graciously received. The agreeable news he brought is, that Clinton for want of provisions has abandoned Philadelphia and marched through the Jerseys to New York without molestation, on condition of not destroying Philadelphia. The Congress has ratified the treaty with France, and intend to treat the Commissioners

Letter 1871. — [1] Hon. George Cranfield Berkeley (1753–1818), second son of fourth Earl of Berkeley; afterwards G.C.B. and Admiral of the White.

[2] The Earl of Sandwich.

[3] Philip Stephens, M.P. for Sandwich; created a Baronet in 1795; d. 1809.

de haut en bas, unless you choose to believe the *Morning Post*, who says five provinces declare for peace. I told you lately my curiosity to know what is to be left to us at a general peace. The wisest thing the ministers could do would be to ask that question incontinently. I am persuaded in the present apathy that the nation would be perfectly pleased, let the terms be what they would. A series of disasters may spoil this good humour, and there often wants but a man to fling a stone to spread a conflagration. The Treasury is not rich enough at present to indemnify the losers of four millions: the stockholders are two hundred and forty thousand, and the fraction forty thousand would make an ugly mob. In short, tempests that used to be composed of irascible elements never had more provocation than they are likely to have; such is the glimpse of our present horizon. Now to your letter.

If your Mecænas's[4] fame is overwhelmed in Lord Chatham's and Voltaire's, it is already revenged on the latter's. Madame du Deffand's letter of to-day says he is already forgotten. *La Belle Poule*[5] has obliterated him, but probably will have a contrary effect on Lord Chatham. All my old friend has told me of Voltaire's death is, that the excessive fatigues he underwent by his journey to Paris, and by the bustle he made with reading his play to the actors and hearing them repeat it, and by going to it, and by the crowds that flocked to him; in one word, the agitation of so much applause at eighty-four threw him into a strangury, for which he took so much laudanum that his frame could not resist all, and he fell a martyr to his vanity. Nay, Garrick, who is above twenty years younger, and as full as vain, would have been choked with such doses of flattery; though he would like to die the death.

[4] The late Earl of Holdernesse.

[5] The frigate which escaped from the *Arethusa* on June 18, after a severe fight.

You, who are not apt to gape for incense, may be believed when you speak well of *Sappho*. I am sorry I must wait for the sight till Lord Harcourt proclaims summer. I enjoy the present, which I remember none like; but even this is clouded by the vexation of seeing this lovely island spoiled and sold to shame! I look at our beautiful improvements, and sigh to think that they have seen their best days. Did you feel none of these melancholy reflections at Wentworth Castle? I wrote the Earl[6] a letter two days ago that will not please him, but can one always contain one's chagrin when one's country is ruined by infatuation? No, we never can revive! We killed the hen that laid the golden eggs! The term *Great Britain* will be a jest. My English pride is wounded, yet there is one comfortable thought remains: when Liberty was abandoned by her sons here, she animated her genuine children, and inspired them to chastise the traitor Scots that attacked her. *They* have made a blessed harvest of their machinations. If there is a drachm of sense under a crown, a Scot hereafter will be reckoned pestilential. Methinks the word prerogative should never sound very delightful in this island; attempt to extend it and its fairest branches wither and drop off. What has an army of fifty thousand men fighting for sovereignty achieved in America? retreated from Boston, retreated from Philadelphia, laid down their arms at Saratoga, and lost thirteen provinces! Nor is the measure yet full! Such are the consequences of our adopting new legislators, new historians, new doctors! Locke and Sidney, for Humes, Johnsons, and Dalrymples! When the account is made up and a future Historiographer Royal casts up debtor and creditor, I hope he will please to state the balance between the last war *for America* and the present *against it*. The advantages of that we know,—Quebec, the

[6] The Earl of Strafford.

Havannah, Martinico, Guadaloupe, the East Indies, the French and Spanish fleet destroyed, &c., &c.; all the bills *per contra* are not yet come in! Our writers have been disputing for these hundred and sixty-six years on Whig and Tory principles. Their successors, who I suppose will continue the controversy, will please to allow at least that if the ministers of both parties were equally complaisant when in power, the splendour of the crown (I say nothing of the happiness of the people, which is never taken into the account) has constantly been augmented by Whig administrations, and has faded (and then and now a little more) when Tories have governed! The reason is as plain: Whig principles are founded on sense; a Whig may be a fool, a Tory must be so: the consequence is plain; a Whig when a minister may abandon his principles, but he will retain his sense and will therefore not risk the felicity of his posterity by sacrificing everything to selfish views. A Tory attaining power hurries to establish despotism: the honour, the trade, the wealth, the peace of the nation, all are little to him in comparison of the despotic will of his master, but are not you glad I write on small paper?

1872. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1778.

You tell me in yours of the 23rd of last month, which I received to-day, that my letters are necessary to your tranquillity. That is sufficient to make me write, though I have nothing very positive to tell you. I did not mention Admiral Keppel's skirmish with and capture of two frigates of the Brest squadron; not because I thought it trifling, but concluding it would produce immediate declaration of war; and, for the fact itself, I knew both our papers and the French would anticipate me. Indeed, Sir John Dick

has talked to me so much of his frequency and punctuality with you, that I might have concluded he would not neglect so public an event; not that I trust to anybody else for sending you intelligence.

No declaration has followed on either side. I, who know nothing but what everybody knows, am disposed to hope that both nations are grown rational; that is, humane enough to dislike carnage. Both Kings are pacific by nature, and the voice of Europe now prefers legislators to *heroes*, which is but a name for destroyers of their species.

It is true, we are threatened with invasion. You ask me why I seem to apprehend less than formerly? For many reasons. In the first place, I am above thirty years older. Can one fear anything in the dregs of life as at the beginning? Experience, too, has taught me that nothing happens in proportion to our conceptions. I have learnt, too, exceedingly to undervalue human policy. Chance and folly counteract most of its wisdom. From the *Mémoires de Noailles* I have learnt that, between the years 1740 and 1750, when I,—ay, and my Lord Chesterfield too,—had such gloomy thoughts, France was trembling with dread of us. These are general reasons. My particular ones are, that, if France meditated a considerable blow, she has neglected her opportunity. Last year, we had neither army nor a manned fleet at home. Now, we have a larger and better army than ever we had in the island, and a strong fleet. Within these three days, our West India and Mediterranean fleets, for which we have been in great pain, are arrived, and bring not only above two millions, but such a host of sailors as will supply the deficiencies in our unequipped men-of-war. The country is covered with camps; General Conway, who has been to one of them, speaks with astonishment of the fineness of the men, of the

regiments, of their discipline and manœuvring. In short, the French court has taught all our young nobility to be soldiers. The Duke of Grafton, who was the most indolent of ministers, is the most indefatigable of officers. For my part, I am almost afraid that there will be a larger military spirit amongst our men of quality than is wholesome for our constitution: France will have done us hurt enough, if she has turned us into generals instead of senators.

I can conceive another reason why France should not choose to venture an invasion. It is certain that at least five American provinces wish for peace with us. Nor can I think that thirteen English provinces would be pleased at seeing England invaded. Any considerable blow received by us would turn their new allies into haughty protectors. Should we accept a bad peace, America would find her treaty with them a very bad one: in short, I have treated you with speculations instead of facts. I know but one of the latter sort. The King's army has evacuated Philadelphia, from having eaten up the country, and has returned to New York. Thus it is more compact, and has less to defend.

General Howe is returned, richer in money than laurels. I do not know, indeed, that his wealth is great.

Fanaticism in a nation is no novelty: but you must know that, though the effects were so solid, the late appearance of enthusiasm about Lord Chatham was nothing but a general affectation of enthusiasm. It was a contention of hypocrisy between the opposition and the court, which did not last even to his burial. Not three of the court attended it, and not a dozen of the minority of any note. He himself said, between his fall in the House of Lords and his death, that, when he came to himself, not one of his old acquaintance of the court but Lord Despencer so much as asked him how he did. Do you imagine people are struck with the death of a man, who were not struck at the sudden appearance of his

death? We do not counterfeit so easily on a surprise, as coolly; and, when we are cool on surprise, we do not grow agitated on reflection.

The last account I heard from Germany was hostile. Four days ago both the Imperial and Prussian ministers expected news of a battle. O, ye fathers of your people, do you thus dispose of your children? How many thousand lives does a king save that signs a peace! It was said in jest of our Charles II that he was the real father of his people, so many of them did he beget himself. But tell me, ye divines, which is the most virtuous man, he that begets twenty bastards, or he that sacrifices an hundred thousand lives? What a contradiction is human nature! The Romans rewarded the man that got three children, and laid waste the world. When will the world know that peace and propagation are the two most delightful things in it? As his Majesty of France has found out the latter[1], I hope he will not forget the former.

1873. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, July 8, 1778.

I have had some conversation with a ministerial person, on the subject of pacification with France; and he dropped a hint, that as we should not have much chance of a good peace, the opposition would make great clamour on it. I said a few words on the duty of ministers to do what they thought right, be the consequence what it would. But as honest men do not want such lectures, and dishonest will not let them weigh, I waived that theme, to dwell on what is more likely to be persuasive, and which I am firmly persuaded is no less true than the former maxim; and that was, that the ministers are *still* so strong, that if they could

Letter 1872.—[1] The Queen of France was then breeding for the first time. *Walpole.*

get a peace that would save the nation, though not a brilliant or glorious one, the nation in general would be pleased with it, and the clamours of the opposition be insignificant.

I added, what I think true, too, that no time is to be lost in treating; not only for preventing a blow, but from the consequences the first misfortune would have. The nation is not yet alienated from the court, but it is growing so; is grown so enough, for any calamity to have violent effects. Any internal disturbance would advance the hostile designs of France. An insurrection from distress would be a double invitation to invasion; and, I am sure, much more to be dreaded, even personally, by the ministers, than the ill-humours of opposition for even an inglorious peace. To do the opposition justice, it is not composed of incendiaries. Parliamentary speeches raise no tumults: but tumults would be a dreadful thorough-bass to speeches. The ministers do not know the strength they have left (supposing they apply it in time), if they are afraid of making any peace. They were too sanguine in making war; I hope they will not be too timid of making peace.

What do you think of an idea of mine of offering France a neutrality? that is, to allow her to assist both us and the Americans. I know she would assist only them: but were it not better to connive at her assisting them, without attacking us, than her doing both? A treaty with her would perhaps be followed by one with America. We are sacrificing all the essentials we *can* recover, for a few words; and risking the independence of this country, for the nominal supremacy over America. France seems to leave us time for treating. She made no scruple of begging peace of us in '63, that she might lie by and recover her advantages. Was not that a wise precedent? Does not she *now* show that it was? Is not policy the honour of nations? I mean, not morally, but has Europe left itself any other honour? And

since it has really left itself no honour, and as little morality, does not the morality of a nation consist in its preserving itself in as much happiness as it can? The invasion of Portugal by Spain in the last war, and the partition of Poland, have abrogated the law of nations. Kings have left no ties between one another. Their duty to their people is still allowed. He is a good king that preserves his people; and if temporizing answers that end, is it not justifiable? You, who are as moral as wise, answer my questions. Grotius is obsolete. Dr. Joseph[1] and Dr. Frederic[2], with four hundred thousand commentators, are reading new lectures—and I should say, thank God, to one another, if the four hundred thousand commentators were not in worse danger than they. Louis XIV is grown a casuist compared to those partitioners. Well, let us simple individuals keep our honesty, and bless our stars that we have not armies at our command, lest we should divide kingdoms that are at our *bienséance*! What a dreadful thing it is for such a wicked little imp as man to have absolute power! But I have travelled into Germany, when I meant to talk to you only of England; and it is too late to recall my text. Good night!

1874. To the Rev. William Cole.

July 12, 1778.

Mr. Lort has delivered your papers to me, dear Sir; and I have already gone through them. I will try if I can make anything of them, but fear I have not art enough, as I perceive there is absolutely but one fact, the expulsion[1]. You have certainly very clearly proved that Mr. Baker was neither supported by Mr. Prior nor Bishop Burnet—but

Letter 1873.—[1] The Emperor of Germany. *Walpole.*

[2] Frederick II of Prussia. *Walpole.*

Letter 1874.—[1] From his fellowship at St. John's College, Cambridge.

these are mere negatives. So is the question whether he intended to compile an *Athenae Cantabrigienses* or not; and on that you say but little, as you have not seen his papers in the Museum. I will examine the printed catalogue, and try if I can discover the truth thence. When I go to town I will also borrow the new *Biographia*, as I wish to know more of the expulsion. As it is our only fact, one would not be too dry on it. Upon the whole, I am inclined to think that it would be preferable to draw up an ample character of Mr. Baker, rather than a life. The one was most beautiful, amiable, conscientious: the other totally barren of more than one event; and though you have taken excellent pains to discover all that was possible, yet there is an obscurity hangs over even the circumstances that did attend him; as his connection with Bishop Crewe[2] and his living. His own modesty comes out the brighter; but then it composes a character, not a life.

As to Mr. Kippis and his censures, I am perfectly indifferent to them. He betrays a pert malignity in hinting an intention of being severe on my father, for the pleasure of exerting a right I allowed, and do allow, to be a just one —though it is not just to do it for *that* reason—however, let him say his pleasure. The truth will not hurt my father: falsehood will recoil on the author.

His asserting that my censure of Addison's character of Lord Somers[3] is not to be justified, is a silly *ipse dixit*, as he does not, in truth cannot, show why it is not to be justified. The passage I objected to is the argument of an old woman; and Mr. Addison having been a writer of true humour is not a justification of his reasoning like a superstitious gossip.

[2] Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham, who conferred the living of Long Newton, in Durham, on Baker. The latter resigned it in 1690.

[3] See *Royal and Noble Authors*.

In the other passage you have sent me, Mr. Kippis is perfectly in the right, and corrects me very justly. Had I ever seen Archbishop Abbot's [4] preface, with the outrageous mass of flattery on, and lies of James I, I should certainly never have said, 'Honest Abbot could not flatter.' I should have said, and do say, I never saw grosser perversion of truth. One can almost excuse the faults of James when his bishops were such base sycophants. What can a king think of human nature, when it produces such wretches? I am too impartial to prefer Puritans to clergy, or *vice versâ*: when Whitgift [5] and Abbot only ran a race of servility and adulation the result is,

that priests of all religions are the same.

James and his Levites were worthy of each other; the golden calf and the idolaters were well coupled; and it is pity they ever came out of the wilderness.

I am very glad Mr. Tyson [6] has escaped death and disappointment: pray wish him joy of both from me. Has not this Indian summer dispersed your complaints? We are told we are to be invaded. Our Abbots and Whitgifts now see with what successes and consequences their preaching up a crusado against America has been crowned! Archbishop Markham may have an opportunity of exercising his martial prowess. I doubt he would resemble Bishop Crewe more than good Mr. Baker. Let us respect only those that are Israelites indeed. I surrender Dr. Abbot to you. Church and presbytery are human nonsense, invented by knaves to govern fools. Church and Kirk are terms for monopolies. *Exalted notions of Church matters* are

[4] George Abbot (1562–1633), Archbishop of Canterbury.

[5] John Whitgift, D.D. (d. 1604), Archbishop of Canterbury.

[6] Michael Tyson the antiquary; he had recovered from a serious illness, and, after a legal dispute, had become Rector of Lambourne, near Ongar, in Essex.

contradictions in terms to the lowliness and humility of the Gospel. There is nothing sublime but the Divinity. Nothing is sacred but as His work. A tree or a brute stone is more respectable as such, than a mortal called an Archbishop, or an edifice called a Church, which are the puny and perishable productions of men. Calvin and Wesley had just the same views as the Popes; power and wealth their objects. I abhor both, and admire Mr. Baker.

P.S. I like popery as well as you, and have shown I do. I like it as I like chivalry and romance. They all furnish one with ideas and visions, which Presbyterianism does not. A Gothic church or a convent fill one with romantic dreams —but for the mysterious, the Church in the abstract, it is a jargon that means nothing, or a great deal too much, and I reject it and its apostles, from Athanasius to Bishop Keene.

1875. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, July 16, 1778.

Though it is a most anxious moment, I do not write to tell you or talk of politics: most men in these regions expect news of a battle at sea[1]; I do not. As we have nothing left to save but ourselves, *I wish theirselves* would leave themselves and us that little.

Jean Jacques[2] is certainly dead as well as Voltaire. Poor Charon! 'Fanny, blooming fair[3],' died here yesterday of a stroke of palsy. She had lost her memory for some years, and remembered nothing but her beauty and not her Methodism. Being confined with only servants, she was continually lamenting, 'I to be abandoned that all the world used to adore!' She was seventy-two.

Letter 1875.—[1] Admiral Keppel put to sea for the second time on July 9, 1778.

[2] Rousseau died on July 2, 1778.

[3] Lady Frances Shirley, formerly much admired by Lord Chesterfield.

I received a letter this morning from the engraver of Johnson's *Poets* to inquire if I knew of any portrait of Dyer or Mallet. If the latter is one of Johnson's poets, I do not wonder Gray was not.

The sun seems to be the only prince that is generous, and sticks by us in our distress. People of all ages call it an old-fashioned summer, such as we used to have ten or twenty years ago, when you are to suppose they were young. I that do not haggle about my threescores, do not remember any such summer these fifty years. It is Italy in a green gown.

Mr. Nicholls and I went last week to see the new apartment at Osterley Park. The first chamber, a drawing-room, not a large one, is the most superb and beautiful that can be conceived, and hung with Gobelin tapestry, and enriched by Adam in his best taste, except that he has stuck diminutive heads in bronze, no bigger than a half-crown, into the chimney-piece's hair. The next is a light plain green velvet bedchamber. The bed is of green satin richly embroidered with colours, and with eight columns; too theatric, and too like a modern head-dress, for round the outside of the dome are festoons of artificial flowers. What would Vitruvius think of a dome decorated by a milliner? The last chamber, after these two proud rooms, chills you: it is called the Etruscan, and is painted all over like Wedgwood's ware, with black and yellow small grotesques. Even the chairs are of painted wood. It would be a pretty waiting-room in a garden. I never saw such a profound tumble into the Bathos. It is going out of a palace into a potter's field. Tapestry, carpets, glass, velvet, satin, are all attributes of winter. There could be no excuse for such a cold termination, but its containing a cold bath next to the bedchamber:—and it is called taste to join these incongruities! I hope I have put you into a passion.

1876. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, July 18, 1778.

As I was going out this evening, I was stopped in Twickenham, and told that France has declared war[1]. I knew the Brest squadron was at sea, and that Admiral Keppel, by letters received from him at the Admiralty on Thursday, is off the Land's End, in hourly expectation of being joined by three or four men-of-war, which will make his fleet thirty ships of the line, with which he was determined to seek the enemy, who have thirty-one, two of fifty guns, and eight frigates. Thus the battle may be fought as soon as war is proclaimed; and thus our ministers may have a full prospect of all their consummately wise measures may produce! What can be expected from two wars when one has been so ignominious?—With an army of fifty thousand men against a rabble, and without being beaten, they have lost a whole continent, and near half that army, and retreated from place to place! Not one general has gained any reputation; our only fleet on this side of the world is to decide whether the two islands are not to be fought for on land. Thus have we, the people, been gamed for; and some few of us against our wills. It is very hard, especially on us that remember other days. I know not what Lord Mansfield's reflections are, when he recollects his sagacious journey[2] to Paris to convince the French cabinet that it was against their interest to protect the Americans, and his famous passage of the Rubicon. I should be sorry to feel what he ought to feel even on the score of folly,—indeed *defendit Numerus*; and all that may be left to us few, may be to meet him, *torva tuentes* like the ghost of Dido.

Letter 1876.—[1] This was not the case.
[2] In the summer of 1774.

England will one day recollect it had a minister to whom it owed twenty years of prosperity and happiness, and who left it a motto that would have preserved such halcyon days. *Quieta non movere* was as wise a saying as any my Lord Bolingbroke bequeathed to my Lord Bute. I do not know whether it is true, what has been said, that my father, on being advised to tax America, replied, 'It must be a bolder minister than I am.' But that motto of his spoke his opinion.

Well; war proclaimed! and I am near sixty-one. Shall I live to see peace again? and what a peace! I endeavour to compose my mind, and call in every collateral aid. I condemn my countrymen, but cannot, would not divest myself of my love to my country. I enjoy the disappointment of the Scots, who had prepared the yoke for the Americans and for our necks too. I cannot blame the French whom we have tempted to ruin us: yet, to be ruined by France!—there the Englishman in me feels again. My chief comfort is in talking to you, though you do not answer me. I write to vent my thoughts, as it is easier than brooding over them, but allow that it is difficult to be very tranquil when the navy of England is at stake. That thought annihilates resentment. I wish for nothing but victory and then peace, yet what lives must victory cost! Nor will one victory purchase it. The nation is so frantic that success would intoxicate us more; yet calamity, that alone could sober us, is too near our doors. Resignation to the will of Heaven is the language of reason as well as of religion, when one knows not what would be best for us. It is a dilemma to which the honest are reduced: our gamesters are in a worse situation. The best they can hope for is to sit down with the *débris* of an empire. What a line they have drawn between them and Lord Chatham! I believe it was modesty made them not

attend his funeral. Will the house of Brunswick listen again to the flatterers of prerogative?

My time of life, that ought to give me philosophy, dispirits me. I cannot expect to live to see England revive. I shall leave it at best an insignificant island. Its genius is vanished like its glories; one sees nor hero nor statesman arise to flatter hope. Dr. Franklin, thanks to Mr. Wedderburn[3], is at Paris. Every way I turn my thoughts, the returns are irksome. What is the history of a fallen empire? A transient satire on the vices and follies that hurried it to dissolution. The protest of a few that foretold it is not registered. The names of Jefferies and two or three principals satisfy the sage moralist who hurries to more agreeable times. I will go to bed and sleep, if I can. Pray write to me; tell me how you reconcile your mind to our situation—I cannot. Two years ago I meditated leaving England if it was enslaved. I have no such thought now. I will steal into its bosom when my hour comes, and love it to the last.

1877. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Saturday, July 18, 1778.

Yesterday evening the following notices were fixed up in Lloyd's Coffee-house:—That a merchant in the City had received an express from France, that the Brest fleet, consisting of twenty-eight ships of the line, were sailed, with orders to burn, sink, and destroy. That Admiral Keppel was at Plymouth, and had sent to demand three more ships of the line to enable him to meet the French. On these

[3] Horace Walpole implies that the hostility towards England of the Americans in general, and of Franklin in particular, was due in great measure to Wedderburn's violent attack on Franklin at a meeting of the Privy Council in Jan. 1774. (See note on letter to Mason of March 19, 1774.)

notices stocks sunk three and a half per cent. An account I have received this morning from a good hand says, that on Thursday the Admiralty received a letter from Admiral Keppel, who was off the Land's End, saying that the *Worcester* was in sight; that the *Peggy* had joined him, and had seen the *Thunderer* making sail for the fleet; that he was waiting for the *Centaur*, *Terrible*, and *Vigilant*; and that having received advice from Lord Shuldham [1] that the *Shrewsbury* was to sail from Plymouth on Thursday, he should likewise wait for her. His fleet will then consist of thirty ships of the line; and he hoped to have an opportunity of trying his strength with the French fleet on our own coast: if not, he would seek them on theirs. The French fleet sailed on the seventh, consisting of thirty-one ships of the line, two fifty-gun ships, and eight frigates. This state is probably more authentic than those at Lloyd's.

Thus you see how big the moment is! and, unless far more favourable to us in its burst than good sense allows one to promise, it must leave us greatly exposed. Can we expect to beat without considerable loss?—and then, where have we another fleet? I need not state the danger from a reverse. The Spanish Ambassador [2] certainly arrived on Monday.

I shall go to town on Monday for a day or two; therefore, if you write to-morrow, direct to Arlington Street. I add no more: for words are unworthy of the situation; and to blame now would be childish. It is hard to be gamed for against one's consent: but when one's country is at stake, one must throw oneself out of the question. When one is old, and nobody, one must be whirled with the current, and shake one's wings like a fly, if one lights on a pebble. The prospect is so dark, that one shall rejoice at whatever

LETTER 1877.—[1] Molyneux Shuldham, first Baron Shuldham; d. 1798. He was Port-Admiral at Plymouth. [2] The Marquis of Almadovar.

does not happen that may. Thus I have composed a sort of philosophy for myself, that reserves every possible chance. You want none of these artificial aids to your resolution. Invincible courage and immaculate integrity are not dependent on the folly of ministers or on the events of war. Adieu!

1878. To Charles Bedford.

Arlington Street, Wednesday, July 22, 1778.

I will be obliged to you if you will look into the Abbey, and see if Mr. Gray's monument is uncovered yet; as, if it is, I will call and see it.

Yours ever,
H. Walpole.

1879. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, July 24, 1778.

Upon reviewing your papers, dear Sir, I think I can make more of them than I at first conceived. I have even commenced the life[1], and do not dislike my ideas for it, if the execution does but answer. At present I am interrupted by another task, which you, too, have wished me to undertake. In a word, somebody has published Chatterton's Works, and charged me heavily for having discountenanced him. He even calls for the indignation of the public against me. It is somewhat singular, that I am to be offered up as a victim at the altar of a notorious impostor! but, as many saints have been impostors, so many innocent persons have been sacrificed to them. However, I shall not be patient under this attack, but shall publish an answer, and the narrative I mentioned to you. I would, as you know, have avoided entering into this affair

Letter 1879.—[1] The Life of Thomas Baker.

if I could; but as I do not despise public esteem, it is necessary to show how groundless the accusation is. Do not speak of my intention, as perhaps I shall not execute it immediately.

I am not in the least acquainted with the Mr. Bridges you mention, nor know that I ever saw him.

The tomb for Mr. Gray is actually erected, and at the generous expense of Mr. Mason, and with an epitaph of four lines, as you heard, and written by him.—But the scaffolds are not yet removed. I was in town yesterday, and intended to visit it, but there is digging a vault for the family of Northumberland, which obstructs the removal of the boards.

I rejoice in your amendment, and reckon it among my obligations to the fine weather, and hope it will be the most lasting of them.

Yours ever,
H. W.

1880. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, July 24, 1778.

Yours of the 19th I did not receive till yesterday. I do not write again so soon to answer it, but on a subject very foreign to all my last, and which I will tell you presently, when I have replied to a few of your articles.

I did not discover, and certainly did not suspect, a bacchanalian disposition in a certain person[1], for we dined together but once. We think alike on that subject, I assure you, but I will reserve it for our meeting.

Madame du Deffand said nothing on the strawberries and cream[2], nor if I asked her would she probably remember

Letter 1880. — [1] Rev. Norton Nicholls, who had recently visited Mason at York.

[2] Mason asked whether Rousseau died of eating strawberries.

to answer. She never interested herself about Rousseau, nor admired him. Her understanding is too just not to be disgusted with his paradoxes and affectations; and his eloquence could not captivate her, for she hates eloquence. She liked no style but Voltaire's, and has an aversion to all modern philosophers. She has scarce mentioned Rousseau, living or dead; and D'Alembert was egregiously mistaken in thinking she wrote my letter to him: Rousseau would have been still more offended had he known how very little she ever thought on him. She was born and had lived in the age of true taste, and allowed nobody but Voltaire to belong to it. She holds that all the rest have corrupted their taste and language. La Fontaine is her idol; that is, simplicity is.

But I shall not forget to answer you on the article of strawberries and cream. How very kind to caution me against them; and how kindly I take it! In truth I am very temperate now on that head, as well as on all others. I eat very little cream, remembering that my stomach is not so young as it was; but for wine, I am persuaded fruit never hurts me, unless wine is poured on it. Yet the other day I did drink two glasses. The excessive heat of the nights had exhausted me so much, that I had recourse to that cordial, and it quite restored me: it would not unless a novelty. I beg your pardon for talking on myself, but gratitude opened my heart. I feel your goodness with great satisfaction, for it could please me in no form more than yours; and I wished to prove to you that one you regard is not childish.

I doubt much whether I can get you a print of the Duchess of Devonshire: certainly not before winter, for Lady Di is at Brighthelmstone; but I will try then: she had not many proofs for herself, and I know had not one left. Everybody, from taste or fashion, tore them away.

The Duke[3], her brother, paid for the plate, and would suffer, I think, but two hundred impressions to be taken. I promised the Duke of Gloucester to beg one for him, which perhaps will not be refused. If I can obtain two, the second is yours. I have set my own in a frame I trust you will like, as it harmonizes with it amazingly, though rich.

I have been two days in town. What I could collect was, that the Congress will not deign to send any answer to the Commissioners; that Lord Howe refused to act as one of them, and that the bear and the monkey have quarrelled[4]; that the Americans have sent an expedition to Florida, and that Washington's army is reduced to seven thousand and is very sickly. One should think the two last circumstances were invented to balance the others; but surely our ministers ought at last to exaggerate on the other side, that things may seem to turn out better than was expected rather than worse, as hitherto they have contrived to make them appear.

France has *not* declared war; and if the Brest fleet did sail it was not a stone's-throw. I imagine they wait for news of D'Estains[5], before they take the last step, or they will draw Keppel aside, and then set forth an embarkation. I sometimes hope peace is not impossible. It cannot be half so bad as a new war in our present situation: it would at least give us time to prepare for war. We are come to the necessity of fortifying the island, or it may be lost in a single battle. When we have no longer the superiority at sea, it would be madness—it would—it is madness to have no resource, no spot where to make a stand: but what signify my politics? who will listen to them?

[3] The Duke of Marlborough.

[4] Governor Johnstone and Lord Carlisle. (See *Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 284.)

[5] Comte d'Estaing was in command of a squadron sent to assist the Americans.

It is not unlucky that I have got something to divert my mind; for I can think on other subjects when I have them. I am at last forced to enter into the history of the supposed Rowley's poems. I must write on it, nay, what is more, print, not directly, controversially, but in my own defence. Some jackanapes at Bristol (I don't know who) has published Chatterton's Works; and I suppose to provoke me to tell the story, accuses me of treating that marvellous creature with contempt; which having supposed, contrary to truth, he invites his readers to feel indignation at me. It has more than once before been insinuated that his disappointment from me contributed to his horrid fate. You know how gently I treated him. He was a consummate villain, and had gone enormous lengths before he destroyed himself. It would be cruel indeed, if one was to be deemed the assassin of every rogue that miscarries in attempting to cheat one; in short, the attack is now too direct not to be repelled. Two months ago I did draw up an account of my share in that affair. That narrative and an answer to this insult which I wrote last night I will publish, signed with my name, but not advertised by it. It will reach all those that take part in the controversy, and I do not desire it should go farther. These things I will have transcribed, and ask your leave to send you before they go to the press. I am in no hurry to publish, nor is the moment a decent one; yet I embrace it, as I shall be the less talked over. I hate controversy, yet to be silent now would be interpreted guilt; and it is impossible to be more innocent than I was in that affair. Being innocent, I take care not to be angry. Mr. Tyrwhitt, one of the enthusiasts to Rowley, has recanted, and published against the authenticity of the poems. The new publisher of Chatterton's undisputed works seems to question the rest too, so his attack on me must be mere impertinent curiosity. One satisfaction will arise from all

this: the almost incredible genius of Chatterton will be ascertained. He had generally genuine powers of poetry; often wit, and sometimes natural humour. I have seen reams of his writing, besides what is printed. He had a strong vein of satire, too, and very irascible resentment; yet the poor soul perished before he was nineteen! He had read, and written, as if he was fourscore, yet it cannot be discovered when or where. He had no more principles than if he had been one of all our late administrations. He was an instance that a complete genius and a complete rogue can be formed before a man is of age. The world has generally the honour of their education, but it is not necessary; you see by Chatterton that an individual could be as perfect as a senate! Adieu!

1881. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Aug. 4, 1778.

For these three weeks I have been constantly waiting for news from sea; for to tell you that nothing had happened was telling you nothing. We are in the oddest situation that can be; at war, in fact, but managed like a controversy in divinity: we and France write against each other, and do each other all the hurt we can, but do not own we are enemies. The communication is open, the packet-boats pass as usual, and French and English are allowed to go to Paris and to come to London, as if to compare notes on all that happens. I am not sorry that this Christian plausibility is preserved; it may facilitate peace without the tediousness of a formal treaty. The two countries have nothing to do but to declare hostilities are at an end.

On Saturday last we thought we had gained a double festival for the first of August. Admiral Keppel's captain arrived, and a rumour spread that he had taken or destroyed

Admiral Hon. Augustus Keppel
From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

seventeen of the Brest fleet. It was not for want of will or endeavours if he has not. He had placed himself between that squadron and port, and tried to force them to battle; which they obstinately declined, till he came so near that they fired on him. He desired no more, and the fight began smartly; but, the wind favouring the French, they kept sailing away, but pouring all their broadsides on his masts and rigging, which they damaged a good deal. This flying fight lasted two hours, and our admiral promised himself a complete battle the next day: but, as the French meant mischief and not glory, at daybreak they were vanished—in short, got into port; and Keppel is returned to Plymouth, heartily chagrined that his enemies are so little ashamed of running away [1].

There is as little prospect of laurels from Byron's squadron [2]. Both his fleet and D'Estaing's have suffered by a great storm. Nor are we likely to have more olives than laurels. The Congress has treated our Commissioners with SOVEREIGN contempt; and the Commissioners themselves have quarrelled, and are coming home. Thus we have begged peace of those we bullied, and only been laughed at. We seem to have wearied fortune in the last war.

Cæsar [3] seems to have made as bad a figure as we. After usurping Bavaria, he is forced to beg peace too. They say he is convinced of having been in the wrong, by a renunciation that has been found of the Emperor Albert [4]. It is the first time a hero at the head of two hundred and twenty thousand men was ever convinced by an old parchment! His imperial reason did not deign to listen to law and equity in the dismemberment of Poland; nor would he now,

LETTER 1881.—[1] Admiral Keppel's indecisive action with the French fleet under the Comte d'Orvilliers took place on July 27, 1778.

[2] Admiral Byron had been sent to the North American station in order to intercept D'Estaing.

[3] The Emperor Joseph II.

[4] Albert II, 1437-1439.

I ween, if Lord Chief Justice Frederic had not enclosed him with more numerous armies. We did not pay much regard to the charters of America, till France helped the latter to carry on the suit.

I am very anxious for the confirmation of this pacification in Germany; for the Duke of Gloucester was just setting out to make the campaign under the King of Prussia. It was worthy of his spirit, and nobody dared to remonstrate against it; and yet the physicians think he could not support an autumnal campaign. The Duchess herself has only shed floods of tears, but not murmured. The behaviour of both does them infinite honour.

Your friends, the Mackenzies [5], are arrived, and Mrs. Anne Pitt is expected daily. Mrs. Foote's friend, old Lady Westmorland [6], is dead, and the ancient beauty, Lady Fanny Shirley [7]; she had lost her head some time, and her senses before, for she has made Lady Huntingdon [8] her heir, having turned Methodist when she was no longer admired.

Our summer is as Italian as yours: I do not remember such an one. Adieu!

1882. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 10, 1778.

I did not write to you on our naval skirmish, because I had nothing to add to what you saw in the papers. It is evident the French had orders to risk nothing, and accordingly they got out of the scrape as fast as they could, yet they pretend that our fleet retired first. If it had, we should

[5] James Stuart Mackenzie, only brother of Lord Bute, married Lady Elizabeth Campbell, third daughter of John, Duke of Argyll.—*Walpole.*

[6] Daughter of a son of the first Duke of Devonshire.—*Walpole.*

[7] Formerly a great beauty, admired and celebrated by Lord Chesterfield, who wrote on her the well-known song, 'When Fanny, blooming fair.'—*Walpole.*

[8] Lady Selina Shirley, niece of Lady Fanny, and patroness of the Methodists.—*Walpole.*

have taken as much pains to charge Mr. Keppel as they could. The consequences are and probably will be good. Their flight will not encourage them, and it has saved our East India fleet, which is all come in. I have heard enough to make me change my mind about Spain, who, I believe, will join in the *mêlée*, unless we are awed into peace, which I cannot but suppose is the meaning of the war going on in this equivocal shape. I expect to hear some *beau matin* that everything is compromised. There are reasons both good and bad why it ought not to surprise one.

I have lengthened my Chattertonian pamphlet, and now think shall not publish it. It will clear me whenever it does appear, and I have rather more respect for posterity than for the present generations, who have evidently lost all ideas of right and wrong; but I will say no more on two topics of so little worth as the present age and myself.

In lieu of everything else, I here send you an original indeed,—the preface to Rousseau's *Mémoires*, which is got out, though the work itself is, I believe, not yet published. The style, the singularity, the intolerable vanity, speak it genuine;—nay, so does the laboured eloquence, which would be sublime if it were not affected frenzy, and worse. I wish you not to give copies, because, should it be discovered, I should be said to have spread it to his prejudice; yet I have none, nor am angry with him by the common rule, because I offended him. So far from it, I have always allowed his masterly genius, and was only angry with him for his own sake, that he, who was born to be superior in common sense, should have stooped to build his fame on paradox, and seemed to choose rather to be talked of for the singularity of his writings, than for their excellence; but this preface goes farther, much farther.—He aims at being the capital figure at the last day. I send it to you, shocking as it is: *la voici.*—

'Je forme une entreprise qui n'eut jamais d'exemples, et dont l'exécution n'aura point d'imitateurs. Je vais montrer à mes semblables un homme dans toute la vérité de la nature, et cet homme c'est moi.

'Moi seul je sens mon cœur et connois les hommes; je ne suis fait comme aucun de ceux que j'ai vus; j'ose croire n'être fait comme aucun de ceux qui existent. Je ne vaux pas mieux ou moins, je suis autre. Si la nature a bien ou mal fait de briser le moule dans lequel elle m'a jeté, c'est ce dont on ne peut juger qu'après m'avoir lu. Que la trompette du Jugement dernier sonne quand elle voudra, je viendrai, ce livre à la main, me présenter devant le Souverain Juge. Je dirai hautement, "Voilà ce que j'ai fait, ce que j'ai pensé, ce que je suis. J'ai dit le bien et le mal avec la même franchise; je n'ai rien tu, rien déguisé, rien pallié; je me suis montré coupable et vil quand je l'ai été; j'ai montré mon intérieur comme tu l'as vu toi-même, Être Éternel. Rassemble autour de moi l'innombrable foule de mes semblables; qu'ils écoutent mes confessions, qu'ils rougissent de mes indignités, qu'ils gémissent de mes misères; que chacun dévoile à son tour son cœur aux pieds de ton trône, et qu'un seul te dise ensuite, je suis meilleur que cet homme-là."'

What can one see in this rhapsody of insufferable pride but a studied delirium, an arrogant humiliation, a confession turned into a bravado,—and for what theatre! and before whom! Cartouche[1] might have proposed to talk in such a style at the Day of Judgement. Think of the audacious insect allotting to himself a mould made on purpose, intending to be the orator of that moment, and demanding to have all mankind judged by comparison with him! To meditate a gasconade for the end of the world!

Letter 1882.—[1] Louis Dominique Cartouche, a famous thief, executed in 1721.

Suppose, instead of her modest contrite deportment, Mary Magdalen had stalked into the hall of the Pharisee with the air of a street-walker, and had bawled out: 'Let the trumpet sound. I declare myself the greatest strumpet in Jerusalem. Here is the list of my whoredoms, who dares own as much? and yet who are chaster than I?' I hope a friend of ours will be cured of his enthusiasm to this new Erostratus, who has burnt the temple of Modesty to make himself talked of. Here I finish: it is impossible to add anything that would be of a piece with this rant.

1883. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 15, 1778.

Your observation of Rowley not being mentioned by William of Wyrcestre is very strong, indeed, dear Sir, and I shall certainly take notice of it. It has suggested to me too, that he is not by Bale[1] or Pitts[2], is he? Will you trouble yourself to look? I conclude he is not, or we should have heard of it. Rowley is the reverse of King Arthur, and all those heroes that have been expected a second time: he is to come again for the first time—I mean as a great poet.

My defence amounts to thirty pages of the size of this paper; yet I believe I shall not publish it. I abhor a controversy, and what is it to me whether people believe in an impostor or not? Nay, shall I convince everybody of my innocence, though there is not the shadow of reason for thinking I was to blame? If I met a beggar in the street, and refused him sixpence, thinking him strong enough to work, and two years afterwards he should die of drinking,

Letter 1883.—[1] John Bale (1495–1563), Bishop of Ossory, author of a history of English literature.

[2] John Pits, D.D. (1560–1616), Roman Catholic divine and writer of biography.

might not I be told I had deprived the world of a capital rope-dancer? In short, to show oneself sensible to such accusations would only invite more; and since they accuse me of contempt, I will have it for my accusers.

My brass plate for Bishop Walpole [3] was copied exactly from the print in Dart's *Westminster*, of the tomb of Robert Dalby [4], Bishop of Durham, with the sole alteration of the name.

I shall return, as soon as I have time, to Mr. Baker's Life: but I shall want to consult you, or, at least the account of him in the new *Biographia*, as your notes want some dates. I am not satisfied yet with what I have sketched; but I shall correct it. My small talent was grown very dull. This attack about Chatterton has a little revived it, but it warns me to have done, for, if one comes to want provocatives, the produce will soon be feeble. Adieu!

Yours most sincerely,
H. W.

1884. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 21, 1778.

I think it so very uncertain whether this letter will find you, that I write it merely to tell you I received yours to-day. I recollect nothing particularly worth seeing in Sussex that you have not seen (for I think you have seen Cowdray and Stansted [1], and I know you have Petworth), but Hurst Monceaux, near Battle; and I don't know whether it is not pulled down. The site of Arundel

[3] Ralph de Walpole (d. 1302), Bishop of Ely.

[4] There was no Robert Dalby, Bishop of Durham; Horace Walpole was perhaps thinking of William Dudley, Bishop of Durham, who died in 1483, and who was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Letter 1884. — [1] Stansted Park, near Racton, in Sussex, a seat of the Earl of Scarborough.

Castle is fine, and there are some good tombs of the Fitzalans at the church, but little remains of the castle; in the room of which is a modern brick house; and in the late Duke's time the ghost of a giant walked there, his Grace said—but I suppose the present Duke has laid it in the Red Sea—of claret.

Besides Knowle and Penshurst, I should think there were several seats of old families in Kent worth seeing; but I do not know them. I poked out Summer Hill[2] for the sake of the *Babylonienne* in Grammont; but it is now a mere farm-house. Don't let them persuade you to visit Leeds Castle, which is not worth seeing.

You have been near losing me and half a dozen fair cousins to-day. The Goldsmiths' Company dined in Mr. Shirley's[3] field, next to Pope's. I went to Ham with my three Waldegrave nieces and Miss Keppel, and saw them land, and dine in tents erected for them from the opposite shore. You may imagine how beautiful the sight was in such a spot and in such a day! I stayed and dined at Ham, and after dinner Lady Dysart with Lady Bridget Tollemache took our four nieces on the water to see the return of the barges, but were to set me down at Lady Browne's. We were, with a footman and the two watermen, ten in a little boat. As we were in the middle of the river, a larger boat full of people drove directly upon us on purpose. I believe they were drunk. We called to them, to no purpose; they beat directly against the middle of our little skiff—but, thank you, did not do us the least harm—no thanks to them. Lady Malpas was in Lord Strafford's garden, and gave us for gone. In short, Neptune never would have had so beautiful a prize as the four girls.

[2] See note on letter to Bentley of Aug. 5, 1752.

[3] Hon. George Shirley, second son of first Earl Ferrers by his second wife; d. 1787.

I hear an express has been sent to —— to offer him the Mastership of the Horse. I had a mind to make you guess, but you never can—to Lord Exeter! Pray let me know the moment you return to Park Place.

1885. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 22, 1778.

I beg you will feel no uneasiness, dear Sir, at having shown my narrative to Dr. Glynn. I can never suspect you, who are always giving me fresh proofs of your friendship, and solicitude for my reputation, of doing anything unkind. It is true, I do not think I shall publish anything about Chatterton. Is not it an affront to innocence, not to be perfectly satisfied in her? My pamphlet, for such it would be, is four times as large as the narrative in your hands, and, I think, would not discredit me—but, in truth, I am grown much fonder of peace than fame; and scribblers or their patrons shall not provoke me to sacrifice the one to the other. Lord Hardwicke, I know, has long been my enemy—latterly, to get a sight of the Conway Papers, he has paid great court to me, which, to show how little I regarded his enmity, I let him see, at least the most curious. But as I set as little value on his friendship, I did not grant another of his requests. Indeed, I have made more than one foe by not indulging the vanity of those that have made application to me; and I am obliged to them, when they augment my contempt by quarrelling with me for that refusal. It was the case of Mr. Masters, and is now of Lord Hardwicke. He solicited me to reprint his Bœotian volume of Sir Dudley Carleton's Papers, for which he had two motives. The first he inherited from his father, the desire of saving money; for though his fortune is so much larger than mine, he knew I would not let out my

press for hire, but should treat him with the expense, as I have done for those I have obliged. The second inducement was, that the rarity of my editions makes them valuable, and though I cannot make men read dull books, I can make them purchase them. His Lordship, therefore, has bad grace in affecting to overlook one, whom he had in vain courted; yet he again is grown my enemy, because I would not be my own. For my writings, they do not depend on him, or the venal authors he patronizes (I doubt very frugally), but on their own merits or demerits. It is from men of sense they must expect their sentence, not from boobies and hireling authors, whom I have always shunned with the whole fry of minor wits, critics, and monthly censors.

I have not seen the review you mention, nor ever do, but when something particular is pointed out to me. Literary squabbles I know preserve one's name, when one's works will not; but I despise the fame that depends on scolding till one is remembered—and remembered by whom? the scavengers of literature! Reviewers are like sextons, who, in a charnel-house, can tell you to what John Thompson or to what Tom Matthews such a skull or such belonged—but who wishes to know? The fame that is only to be found in such vaults, is like the fires that burn unknown in tombs, and go out as fast as they are discovered. Lord Hardwicke is welcome to live among the dead if he likes it, and can contrive to exist nowhere else.

Chatterton did abuse me under the title of Baron of Otranto, but unluckily the picture is more like Dr. Milles, and Chatterton's own devotees, than to me, who am but a recreant antiquary, and, as the poor lad found by experience, did not swallow every fragment that was offered to me as antique; though that is a feature he has bestowed on me.

I have seen, too, the criticism you mention on the *Castle of Otranto*, in the preface to the *English Baron*. It is not at all oblique; but, though mixed with high compliments, directly attacks the visionary part, which, says the author or authoress, makes one laugh. I do assure you, I have not had the smallest inclination to return that attack. It would even be ungrateful, for the work is a professed imitation of mine, only stripped of the marvellous; and so entirely stripped, except in one awkward attempt at a ghost or two, that it is the most insipid dull nothing you ever saw. It certainly does not make one laugh: for what makes one doze, seldom makes one merry.

I am very sorry to have talked for near three pages on what relates to myself, who should be of no consequence, if people did not make me so, whether I will or not. My not replying to them, I hope, is a proof I do not seek to make myself the topic of conversation.—How very foolish are the squabbles of authors! They buzz and are troublesome for a day, and then repose for ever on some shelf in a college library, close by their antagonists, like Henry VI and Edward IV at Windsor.

I shall be in town in a few days, and will send you the heads of painters, which I left there; and along with them, for yourself, a translation of a French play, that I have just printed here. It is not for your reading, but as one of the Strawberry editions, and one of the rarest, for I have printed but seventy-five copies. It was to oblige Lady Craven, the translatress; and will be an aggravation of my offence to *Sir Dudley's State Papers*.

I hope this Elysian summer, for it is above Indian, has dispersed all your complaints. Yet it does not agree with fruit; the peaches and nectarines are shrivelled to the size of damsons; and half of them drop. Yet you remember what portly bellies the peaches had at Paris, where it is

generally as hot. I suppose our fruit-trees are so accustomed to rain, that they don't know how to behave without it. Adieu!

Yours ever,

H. W.

P.S. I can divert you with a new adventure, that has happened to me in the literary way. About a month ago, I received a letter from a Mr. Jonathan Scott at Shrewsbury, to tell me he was possessed of a MS. of Lord Herbert's account of the court of France, which he designed to publish by subscription, and which he desired me to subscribe to, and to assist in the publication. I replied, that having been obliged to the late Lord Powis and his widow, I could not meddle with any such thing, without knowing that it had the consent of the present Earl and his mother. Another letter, commending my reserve, told me Mr. Scott had applied for it formerly, and would again now. This showed me they did not consent. I have just received a third letter, owning the approbation is not yet arrived; but to keep me employed in the meantime, the modest Mr. Scott, whom I never saw, nor know more of than I did of Chatterton, proposes to me to get his fourth son a place in the civil department in India, the father not choosing it should be in the military, his three elder sons being engaged in that branch already.—If this fourth son breaks his neck, I suppose it will be laid to my charge!

P.S. 25th.—I shall send the prints to the coach to-morrow.

1886. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Aug. 25, 1778.

You tell me, my dear Sir, that you depend so entirely on me for intelligence, at least for the confirmation of public events, that I must not let yesterday's *Gazette* go away to-night without writing you a line. Military narratives are apt to be a little oracular, and ours of late have wanted some additional obscurity. You will collect from yesterday's that General Clinton's army did get to New York, though with some difficulty, which, ministerially, you are to take for a victory; and, wherever any darkness hangs over it, you must clear it up on our side. I divine that Washington was ill served, for he has brought two of his generals[1] to a court martial; and the excessive heats seem to have fought against both armies. This is the quintessence of what I know of the matter; and, upon the whole, the Royal army has gained an escape—I doubt, not much to their comfort; for they find no plenty at New York, and Monsieur D'Estaign blocks up the fleet there: so, probably, accounts will not mend.

Our fleet at home has not sailed again. There are rumours of dissensions between Admiral Keppel and Sir Hugh Palliser[2], and even of a duel between them; which, however, I have heard from no good authority: in short, I have nothing agreeable to tell you, and I do not love to send anything that is not to the glory of my country 'cross the Channel.

Letter 1886.—[1] General Lee was tried by court martial, and was suspended from command for a year.

[2] Vice-Admiral Sir Hugh Palliser (1723–1796), first Baronet, third in command under Keppel. Palliser disobeyed Keppel's signals during the indecisive action of July 27, 1778. He and Keppel were on bad terms, but fought no duel. Palliser afterwards applied for a court martial on Keppel, which resulted in the latter's acquittal. Palliser was subsequently appointed Governor of Greenwich Hospital, in spite of a strong protest on the part of the House of Commons.

The German peace[3] seems to halt. I should think it, however, still in agitation, as no considerable action has happened. The Duke of Gloucester has yet received no answer from the Prussian, but expects it this week. He is determined to go if he is accepted—to every peril indeed, for his strength is not equal to it.

We have had the most marvellous summer that I ever remember in all my days. It is still sultry; and I am suffering, though I write between every open door and window in a back-room where the sun never enters. The harvest is prodigious; and we might have wine and oil, had we made preparations for them. I am astonished my nephew preserves any sense (I do not hear he does, much), it shows his disorder is more periodic than eventual.

The Duke of Ancaster is dead, and the Mastership of the Horse to be disposed of. This would have been an object in some summers; but we do not want topics of conversation at present. I used to make excuses for the shortness of my letters at this season. That is not the case at present. I have given you the reason in the line at the top of this page[4]. Adieu!

1887. To the Rev. William Mason.

Arlington Street, Aug. 25, 1778.

You have put an end, my dear Sir, to my thoughts of publishing my narrative, for you have said in four lines all that I have been trying to say in thirty pages; so my *native eloquence*, which your partiality honours, proves what I have long suspected it was, only easy verbiage. In the early part of my life I wished to have it known that I was

[3] Peace was not concluded until May 1779.

[4] *Vide* end of the second paragraph. *Walpole.*

not a fool—doctors differ on the method and on the success: now, when I was grown much more indifferent to fame, you have bestowed on me more than I should ever have presumed to ask. I am now like people that have a ticket to Richmond Park, which they lend to others when they can go in without, by being known to be in favour with the proprietor; or like country squires returned for two places, who make their option for the county, and resign their family borough, on which perhaps there is not a tenement left standing. I choose my niche in your verses[1]; and my namesakes (my uncle, my cousin, and his son) shall be welcome to all the memory that shall remain of writings under the appellation of H. W., reserving only what is said of individual me in the Life of Gray, whose monument, by the way, I shall visit to-morrow.

I must not say more of your poetry, because it is the only poetry of yours to which I may be partial; but when I have told you how exceedingly I am flattered by being immortalized in it, you may be sure I am content with my patent. I must too say no more, because without blending myself with you at least indirectly, I know not how to commend, and I should be the falsest as well as the vainest of mortals, if I made the smallest comparison between us. I hope you think I know enough of poetry, not to confound the genuine heir of the right line with a maker of prose—for poet, Phœbus knows I am not, and if I do not waive every sort of pretension, it is only that you may not have bestowed an encomium on a subject totally worthless.

I should have replied to your last sooner, if I had been sure that you were not set out on your tour. I shall be ready to set out for Nuneham whenever I receive my summons.

Letter 1887.—[1] An *Epistle* in verse addressed by Mason to Horace Walpole.

It is but this moment that I am come to town, and would fulfil the duty of gratitude, before I inquired about the new engagement[2] in America. For the *Gazette* account, I do not understand it, which is being a good subject, for, like other such relations, it is only meant to confound. All I do know is that on Sunday night the undisciplined courtiers spoke of it in most dismal terms. If I guess right Washington was ill served, and thence, and by the violent heats, could not effect all his purpose; but an army on a march through a hostile country, that is twice beaten back, which is owned, whose men drop down with heat, have no hospitals, and were hurrying to a place of security, must have lost more than 380 men. In fact they were hurrying whence they could not stay into the last trap. They will be starved into surrender or desperation at New York; and D'Estaign is blocking up our port and fleet, and a swingeing lie will the *Gazette* have to tell, if both army and fleet are taken.

The papers say that Keppel and Palliser have fought a duel; I do not know how truly. The reason given in the papers is *not* the true, if another that has been whispered is; namely that Palliser did not obey Keppel's signal, though the former at first behaved bravely; and is not suspected of want of spirit, but of Mindenian *finesse*, and that by secret order of the Trident-bearer[3]. Keppel was much insulted at Plymouth, by the same direction as supposed; and that provocation may have brought out what was at first suppressed. However, I affirm nothing of all this, though I have heard enough by different channels to incline me to believe there is an appearance of foundation in the groundwork; though it is impossible to conceive that

[2] The action fought at Monmouth Court House on June 28, 1778, during Clinton's retreat to New York.

[3] The Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty.

revenge could have blinded an old politician so far, as to have made him lose all sight of the advantage that would have accrued even to himself from a victory.

In short, disgraces and misfortunes thicken so fast, that I believe there will be no time to unravel half, while there is an opportunity, supposing there were one. History will be forced to poke and patch out scraps, and when the whole is a heap of ruins, some David Hume will be to compose a system of wise and virtuous motives, which always tend to produce folly and crimes, and then the induction will be, that nobody should be wise and virtuous. Adieu! Adieu!

P.S. You may imagine I am impatient for the sequel[4].

1888. To the Rev. William Mason.

Aug. 2[6?], 1778.

I have seen Gray's monument. The absolutely necessary position is very disadvantageous to it, and prevents any grace in the outline; his nose is a little too aquiline, but both his head and the Muse's are well executed; her body is a little flat, and her legs, from the same want of place, too small and crowded; your epitaph and friendship are the most shining ingredients.

When I mention your friendship for him, I recollect that I was too much intoxicated in my last with your partiality to me. I mean that I did not receive it with humility enough; but in the satisfaction of being recorded by you forgot how little I deserve it. As there has been so much of blamable in my life, I am conscious that I ought to desire to be spoken of by my enemies, and not by my friends, that the truth may be told, not palliated. To ask

[4] The sequel to the *Epistle* mentioned above.

that would be an artful way of avoiding it. I have been told, that what I begged you to say of my being the first to blame in my differences with Gray, persuaded some that the reverse was true. I am sure *that* was not my intention; and I would say it still more strongly, if it would not look affected. I have a horror for any praise that one does not deserve: humility is next to vainglory, if it is put on, and has no merit but in avoiding impudence. Simplicity is the medium to be sought, and silence about oneself the surest way of being simple. A corner in your writings which you have allotted to me, I am not lowly enough to waive; but I have regard enough for you to desire that you should never say anything of me that you may be ashamed of. Remember, your writings will be standards, and remember too that Pope's blindness to Bolingbroke took off the edge of half his satires. I shall not suffer you to hurt your own fame in compliment to me; early and late have I despised Cicero's *orna me*. Has one better claim to praise one has not earned, than to money one has stolen? And to beg one's friend to lie for one! No, my dear Sir, there are a few honest good men that deserve such verses as yours: I should think I robbed them, while they want your praise.

28 Aug. I had written thus far, when I received your second part[1] by Mr. Alderson. You desire me not to write, but to bring you my answer, and odd as the request is, I shall obey it, for two reasons; the first is, that the impression of your seal is so sharp, that I am convinced all or most of those you send by the post have been opened; the second is, that your modesty would not permit me to tell you to your face how much I am charmed with your poetry. You have an original talent for this style, that without resembling either, is much more like Horace's than Pope's was; and instead of piddling with petty dunces, you

LETTER 1888.—[1] The second part of Mason's *Epistle* to Walpole.

gibbet greater dunces and much greater rogues. Nay, you do what History cannot; for you record their villainies, and if History's majestic gravity could contrive to register them, yet nobody would read what ought to be enrolled only by the Ordinary of Newgate; but when you make your readers laugh at our state culprits, they will remember them.

There are two odd renconters in your second part that I must mention. You have introduced the Duke of Richmond, who is one of the virtuous few that is worthy of such a pen as yours (and was in my eye in the foregoing page), and you have brought in Pope, and Lord Mansfield, which I have done too in my narrative, as you will see, though for a different quotation; but, in short, you have made my narrative useless; you have anticipated it by inspiration, and Apollo has made you a prophet as well as a poet. I that knew all the circumstances, have told tediously what you, by magic I think, have set in a ten times clearer light and compendiously. And as I owed to you and Gray the confirmation of my doubts at first, you have told all that is necessary of my story for me, and made it entertaining. Remember this is not to flatter you, and draw more panegyric from you. You have justified me in as innocent a transaction as any of my life, and I am more than satisfied, and the best way of thanking you is to be jealous of your honour, and to turn it on more meritorious objects. I do not deserve praise: to justify the innocent is worthy of you. If I was not irreproachable on the article of Chatterton, I assure you I would tell you so, for instead of being pleased with your defence, it would aggravate my contrition, and therefore I beg you will never put me to shame. My parts are moderate, and I trouble my head little about them; but I would give a pound of them, if I have so much, for an ounce more of virtues.

The crisis of this country will soon put all men to the test; brand the guilty and reward the good; and since the fountain of honour is now the channel of corruption, wrench the chalice from his hand and dispense the waters to the deserving. The moment is coming, I think, when the constitution may be restored, though not the empire. If they who call themselves patriots flinch from their duty, they will deserve your lash, still more than the present crew. I have no great hopes, though the moment is so propitious (as it is a repetition of precedent lessons) for showing that the folly of tyranny leads directly to the destruction of darling prerogative. I have sometimes thought, so servile has been the copy, that Lord Mansfield has drawn out the steps of James II, and recommended them one by one, in order to ruin the house of Hanover by the same manœuvres that paved their way to the crown. Or he was a woful or a most presumptuous politician, to flatter himself he could succeed where Jefferies and Jesuits failed. In short, he and the Scotch have no way of redeeming the credit of their understandings, but by avowing that they have been consummate villains. *Stavano bene; per star meglio, stanno quì.*

1889. To the Rev. William Cole.

Sept. 1, 1778.

I have now seen the *Critical Review*, with Lord Hardwicke's note, in which I perceive the sensibility of your friendship for me, dear Sir, but no rudeness on his part. Contemptuous it was to reprint Jane Shore's letter without any notice of my having given it before; the apology, too, is not made to me—but I am not affected by such incivilities, that imply more ill-will than boldness. As I expected more from your representation, I believe I expressed myself

with more warmth than the occasion deserved; and, as I love to be just, I will, now I am perfectly cool, be so to Lord H. His dislike of me was meritorious in him, as I conclude it was founded on my animosity to *his* father, as mine had been, from attachment to *my own*, who was basely betrayed by the late Earl. The present has given me formerly many peevish marks of enmity; and I suspect, I don't know if justly, that he was the mover of the cabal in the Antiquarian Society against me—but all their misunderstandings were of a size that made me smile rather than provoked me. The Earl, as I told you, has since been rather wearisome in applications to me, which I received very civilly, but encouraged no farther. When he wanted me to be his printer, I own I was not good Christian enough not to be pleased with refusing, and yet in as well-bred excuses as I could form, pleading, what was true at the time, as you know, that I had laid down my press—but so much for this idle story. I shall think no more of it, but adhere to my specific system. The Antiquarians will be as ridiculous as they used to be; and, since it is impossible to infuse taste into them, they will be as dry and dull as their predecessors. One may revive what perished, but it will perish again, if more life is not breathed into it than it enjoyed originally. Facts, dates, and names will never please the multitude, unless there is some style and manner to recommend them, and unless some novelty is struck out from their appearance. The best merit of the Society lies in their prints; for their volumes, no mortal will ever touch them but an antiquary. Their Saxon and Danish discoveries are not worth more than monuments of the Hottentots; and for Roman remains in Britain, they are upon a foot with what ideas we should get of Inigo Jones, if somebody was to publish views of huts and houses that our officers run up at Senegal and Goree. Bishop

Lyttelton used to torment me with barrows, and Roman camps; and I would as soon have attended to the turf graves in our churchyards. I have no curiosity to know how awkward and clumsy men have been in the dawn of arts, or in their decay.

I exempt you entirely from my general censure on antiquaries, both for your singular modesty in publishing nothing yourself, and for collecting stone and bricks for others to build with. I wish your materials may ever fall into good hands—perhaps they will! Our empire is falling to pieces; we are relapsing to a little island. In that state, men are apt to inquire how great their ancestors have been? And, when a kingdom is past doing anything, the few that are studious look into the memorials of past time; nations, like private persons, seek lustre from their progenitors, when they have none in themselves, and the farther they are from the dignity of their source. When half its colleges are tumbled down, the ancient University of Cambridge will revive from your collections, and you will be quoted as a living witness that saw it in its splendour!

Since I began this letter, I have had another curious adventure. I was in the Holbein chamber, when a chariot stopped at my door. A letter was brought up—and who should be below but—Dr. Kippis. The letter was to announce himself and his business; flattered me on my writings, desired my assistance, and particularly my direction and aid for his writing the life of my father. I desired he would walk up, and received him very civilly, taking not the smallest notice of what you had told me of his flirts at me in the new *Biographia*. I told him, that if I had been applied to, I could have pointed out many errors in the old edition, but as they were chiefly in the printing, I supposed they would be corrected. With regard to my father's life, I said, it might be partiality, but I had such confidence in

my father's virtues, that I was satisfied the more his life was examined, the clearer they would appear. That I also thought that the life of any man written under the direction of his family did nobody honour; and that, as I was persuaded my father's would stand the test, I wished that none of his relations should interfere in it. That I did not doubt but the Doctor would speak impartially, and that was all I desired. He replied, that he did suppose I thought in that manner, and that all he asked was to be assisted in facts and dates. I said, if he would please to write the life first, and then communicate it to me, I would point out any errors in facts that I should perceive. He seemed mighty well satisfied—and so we parted—but is it not odd, that people are continually attacking me, and then come to me for assistance?—but when men write for profit, they are not very delicate.

I have resumed Mr. Baker's Life, and pretty well arranged my plan; but I shall have little time to make any progress till October, as I am going soon to make some visits.

I hope you have received the heads of the painters.

Yours ever,

H. W.

1890. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 10, 1778.

I write a few words to satisfy you, dear Sir, that I received both your letters together. If I did not mention them, you might think the franked one had strayed.

I rejoice that the heat of the weather has been so serviceable to you, and I hope the little return of tenderness in your feet will not last, as the season continues so dry.

I have run through the new articles in the *Biographia*,

Letter 1890.—Hitherto dated Sept. 18.

and think them performed but with a heavy hand. Some persons have not trusted the characters of their ancestors, as I did my father's, to their own merit. On the contrary, I have met with one whose corruption is attempted to be palliated by imputing its punishment to the revenge of *my father*—which, by the way, is confessing the guilt of the convict. This was the late Lord Barrington[1], who, I believe, was a very dirty fellow: for, besides being expelled the House of Commons on the affair of the Harburgh lottery, he was reckoned to have twice sold the Dissenters to the court—but, in short, what credit can a *Biographia Britannica*, which ought to be a standard work, deserve, when the editor is a mercenary writer, who runs about to relations for directions, and adopts any tale they deliver to him? This very instance is a proof that it is not a jot more creditable than a peerage. The authority is said to be a nephew of Judge Foster (consequently, I suppose, a friend of Judge Barrington[2]), and he pretends to have found a scrap of paper, nobody knows on what occasion written, that seems to be connected with nothing, and is called a palliative, if not an excuse, of Lord B.'s crime. A man is expelled from Parliament for a scandalous job, and it is called a sufficient excuse to say the minister was his enemy; and this, near forty years after the death of both! and without any impeachment of the justice of the sentence! Instead of which, we are told that Lord B. was *suspected* of having offended Sir R. W., who took that opportunity of being revenged.—Supposing he did; which at most you see was a suspicion grounded on a suspicion, it would at least imply, that he had found a good opportunity. A most admirable acquittal! Sir R. Walpole was expelled for

[1] John Shute Barrington (1678–1734), first Viscount Barrington.

[2] Hon. Daines Barrington (1727–1800), fourth son of first Viscount Barrington; at this time second Justice of Chester. He was the friend and correspondent of Gilbert White.

having endorsed a note that was not for his own benefit, nor ever supposed to be; and it was the act of a whole outrageous party; yet, abandoned as Parliaments sometimes are, a minister would not find them very complaisant in gratifying his private revenge against a member without some notorious crime. Not a syllable is said of any defence the culprit made; and, had my father been guilty of such violence and injustices, it is totally incredible that he, whose minutest acts and his most innocent were so rigorously scrutinized, tortured, and blackened, should never have heard that act of power complained of. The present Lord Barrington, who opposed him, saw his fall, and the Secret Committee appointed to canvass his life, and when a retrospect of twenty years was desired, and only ten allowed, would certainly have pleaded for the longer term, had he had anything to say in behalf of his father's sentence. Would so warm a Patriot then, though so obedient a courtier now, have suppressed the charge to this hour? This Lord B., when I was going to publish the second edition of my *Noble Authors*, begged it as a favour of me to suppress all mention of his father—a strong presumption that he was ashamed of him—I am well repaid! but I am certainly now at liberty to record that good man. I shall—and shall take notice of the satisfactory manner in which his sons have whitewashed their patriarch!

I recollect a saying of the present peer that will divert you when contrasted with forty years of servility, which even in this age makes him a proverb. It was in his days of virtue. He said, 'If I should ever be so unhappy as to have a place that would make it necessary for me to have a fine coat on a Birthday, I would pin a bank-bill on my sleeve.' He had a place in less than two years, I think—and has had almost every place that every adminis-

tration could bestow. Such were the Patriots that opposed that excellent man, my father, allowed by all parties to have been as incapable of revenge as ever minister was—but whose experience of mankind drew from him that memorable saying, 'that very few men ought to be Prime Ministers: for it is not fit many should know how bad men are'—one can see a little of it without being a Prime Minister! If one shuns mankind and flies to books, one meets with their meanness and falsehood there too! one has reason to say, there is but one good, that is God.—Adieu! Yours ever,

H. Walpole.

1891. To Earl Harcourt.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1778.

I should not for one moment have delayed thanking your Lordship for the honour of your very kind invitation if I had not been absent, and did not receive it till last night, when I returned from Park Place after the post was gone. I had gone thither to keep Mr. Conway and Lady Aylesbury company on the death of Lord William Campbell[1], and was frightened home by an attack of the gout in my knee, which prevents me, my dear Lord, from daring to name a day for having the great pleasure of waiting on your Lordship and Lady Harcourt. I do hope to execute my wish on Monday next, for the motion of the chaise has removed the pain into my foot, and when it flutters about I have seldom found it to end in a fit; yet vexatious as it would be to lose my visit to Nuneham, it would mortify me still more to trouble your Lordship with my decrepitude, and therefore be assured I will not venture if I am not quite well, and as *Herculean*

Letter 1891.—[1] Fourth son of fourth Duke of Argyll, and brother of Lady Ailesbury.

as ever. My best friends shall not be troubled with my moans, nor my enemies neither, though the last sooner; and yet I abhor Lady Mary Wortley, who said, 'People wish their enemies dead—but I do not; I say give them the gout, give them the stone!' indeed I would not give them a bodily pang—a little twitch in their minds, that would make them feel for others, would be rather wholesome.

I must not omit my compliments on Colonel Harcourt's marriage[2], and yet it is not with perfect cordiality. It is not thence I wish for a Lord Nuneham. Pray forgive me; in friendship I am a Tory, and love the right line, though I desire the house of Harcourt may reach to the end of the world, as it has reached from the beginning.

I beg your Lordship's prayers for those that are to travel by land or water, or rather that they may travel, and pray do it as sincerely and fervently as he does for whom your prayers are desired.

Your Lordship's
Most faithful and obedient
Humble servant,
HOR. WALPOLE.

P.S. Your Lordship authorizes me and therefore I presume to add the following words to an Israelite indeed:—

TO MR. MASON.

Vide in my writing-box a long letter that will clear me from your accusation; and the reasons why I choose to bring it myself, moreover I have waited time out of mind for Mr. Alderson. I pressed him to come and see my

[2] Colonel Harcourt married on Sept. 10, 1778, Mary, widow of Thomas Lockhart, and daughter of Rev. William Danby, of Swinton, Yorkshire.

house, and flattered myself that would be a temptation; but he is a priest,

And Strawberry must yield to Sion Hill.

As to wanting the conclusion, I do ardently, especially if it is *ad infinitum*. Do you think I can have enough of you, of you *issime*? do you imagine I have no self-love? am I so accustomed to flattery as to be surfeited with it? am I to be praised in every magazine like Garrick and Dr. Johnson; and if not satiated with panegyrics, do I write them on myself, like the former? do I not know that a line of yours will preserve me like a fly in amber? what do you think is come to me? In short, in self-defence I must tell you why I did not send away my letter. I have done such justice on myself in it, on your account, that my modesty would not hold out; and though I shall be rigorously just enough to trust you with my confession, I could not bring myself to stand in a sheet before the clerks of the Post Office, and I am too idle to write a letter over again—so much for that.

I sit feeling and handling and probing myself from hand to foot and putting myself to pain, in trying if the gout is gone. I am just like Harlequin, when he was tickling himself to death. If it does not come before Monday, I shall think myself safe. I was rejoiced to be got home; but when I came up into the blue room, and found Lord Harcourt's letter, I was out of my wits; yet I do not despair, as the journey has shifted the seat of the pain, which I always reckon a good symptom. I have begged the prayers of Lord Harcourt and his congregation, but I will have none of yours: they are not worth a straw. Should we be in such a dismal situation, if you could have prayed us out of it? The English clergy have prayed for Popery and slavery, and drawn down miseries on us, that will not be suspended

for your deprecations, because folly and iniquity are punished by their natural consequences.

My commission to you shall be to lay my homage at Miss Fauquier's feet, which will make it more agreeable. I shall be very happy or very miserable on Monday on all your accounts, as no party could be assembled more to the liking of my heart, but I must not trespass too much in a postscript, for which I again beg Lord Harcourt's pardon. You will oblige me, dear Sir, if you will drop in conversation that Lady Craven has lately allowed me to print *at my press* her translation of the *Somnambule*; and pray observe if no one in the company seems to feel a *soupçon* of remorse. I shall not tell you why, but I have my reasons.

1892. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1778.

Your last is of August 22nd, and mine was of the 25th. Since then I could have told you of nothing but expectations; nor are they realized yet. Admiral Keppel has been hunting for the Brest fleet, who has either gone southward, or are dodging in and out of their ports: at least he had not found them. But if the god of sea-fights does not smile, the god of merchantmen has wrought miracles: all our fleets are come in from Portugal, the West Indies, and every other mart: he has been as cunning as if he were the demon of smugglers.

Letters are arrived too from New York. D'Estaign had quitted that blockade, and was thought to be sailed to attack Rhode Island. Lord Howe has gone after him with an inferior force, but, they say, hoping to be joined by six of Byron's squadron; which six are come to light again, and were not far off. Of that Admiral not a word. This is the quintessence of all I know.

In my family we are very happy that the King of Prussia has sent the Duke a most handsome excuse, being afraid of exposing a constitution so delicate as his Royal Highness's to the fatigue of a latter campaign; so *that* anxiety is at an end! Prince Henry's [1] success has not availed much. Having devoured the country, the Prussians have been forced to step back. The people that have been devoured count for nothing.

Your Duchess of Kingston is a paltry mountebank. It is too ridiculous to have airs after conviction. Mrs. Anne Pitt, I hear, is arrived. Her nephew, Mr. Thomas Pitt, I believe you will see ere long. A weakness is fallen on his knees, and made him a cripple. He is, I think, set out for Italy, like Æneas, with his Creusa [2], her father of eighty-seven, and two sucking babes. Let me give you a caution: he and I have never been on more than civil terms since Mr. Grenville's reign. He now swears by the ghost of his uncle Chatham, whom in those days he detested.

I saw Mr. Mackenzie last week, who spoke of you with the heartiest kindness; and so does Lady Betty [3]. Lady Chesterfield is dead, at about fourscore. She was not a girl when she came over with George I.

What can I tell you more? My politics, beyond facts, would be but the conjectures of a private dreamer. Yet I am ashamed to send such a sippet of a letter; especially when you are impatient for mine, and reckon on and depend upon them. But you would not trust to them, if I were not cautious not to send you anything but truths; no easy task, if I were not brief. Ten thousand lies are propagated every week, not only by both sides, but by

Letter 1892.—[1] Prince Henry of Prussia, commanding an army under his brother, Frederick the Great, invaded Bohemia in the summer of 1778.

[2] Thomas Pitt (afterwards Lord Camelford) married in 1771 Anne, daughter and co-heir of Pinckney Wilkinson, of Burnham, Norfolk.

[3] Lady Elizabeth Campbell, third daughter of John, Duke of Argyll. *Walpole.*

stock-jobbers; for those grave folks, moneyed citizens, contribute exceedingly to embroil and confound History, which was not very authentic before they were spawned. Newspapers, that ought to facilitate intelligence, are the vehicles of lies, and blunders, and scandal; and Truth, that formerly could trudge ten miles on foot, cannot now get along the road for the crowds of counterfeits. An historian, who shall consult the Gazettes of the times, will write as fabulous a romance as Gargantua.

You will wish to know something of Spain's intentions. I am sure I cannot satisfy you. She has a fleet, and she arms; but her Ambassador[4] is here—if to blind us, his purpose is not quite answered, for many have no faith in him. On the other hand, though at war with France, neither country takes notice of it. The English pass through Calais as quietly as just after a peace.

The Spanish Ambassador, whose size makes him look as if he represented the King of Lilliput, diverts the town with his gallantries, which are not at all in the style of the novels of his country, nor consist in mere serenades. He made a visit lately to a house of ill odour, and, though they say his wife is jealous, he left his two footmen at the door with flambeaux. His generosity, too, was not of a piece with the masters of Peru. He gave the nymph but half a guinea, and a shilling to the maid. As a pigmy does not pay with his person, the damsels made much noise against the receipt of silver pennies, which might be in proportion to his stature, but were not to his character. To stifle their clamours, he declared he was the Venetian Resident; and now he has a quarrel on his hands with that minister for the double scandal.

I shall be very glad to see your nephew, though sorry you lose him; and I am sure I shall find he is more like

[4] Count Almodovar. *Walpole.*

his father, for having conversed with you. Have you given him a parcel of my letters?

1893. To Earl Harcourt.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday evening, Sept. 27, 1778.

I CANNOT let the first evening of my return home pass, my dear Lord, without telling you how happy I was, and am, with the four days I enjoyed at Nuneham. The sensation was more than pleasure, for the reflection is as dear as the reality. To experience so much goodness and friendship from those one most esteems, contents every feeling, and flatters every vanity, nay, would force vanity upon one, were one ever so humble. Pray allow my gratitude to say thus much: shall impudent adulation give what doses it will, shall power swallow them and be ready for more, and shall not I thank your Lordship for honouring me with the select distinction of your friendship, because you have no post to bestow, and I ambition none? It would be hard indeed if sincere professions were to be abolished, because falsehood chooses to profess. When I go to seats of power, or when your Lordship shall blush to receive my homage—from the conscience of not deserving it, why then I shall have no call to offer it, for there will be no room for me at Nuneham.

Were I to fulfil all the duties I contracted this last week, I should write to Lady Harcourt too, but she is too bashful to hear what I would say, and I know will receive it with more pleasure from your Lordship,

> Her husband the relator she prefers
> Before an angel.

In one word, though not the most beautiful of Lady Harcourt's compositions, not one pleased me so much as her

lines on your Lordship's birthday. They contain such a picture of virtue and felicity, that they deserve a *Spectator* by Mr. Addison; not that he could do justice to them, but having the talent of preaching, and of yet being fashionable, the verses, with his commentary, would have been an immortal memorial of an union that deserves to be an immortal model. These above all I beg to print, that I in my generation may do some good. The poem occasioned by the censures on the Duchess of Kingston is of higher class, and another lecture of morality and good-nature united. I know they will lose in the impression—I mean as I heard them, for after Lady Harcourt had conquered her timidity and amiable modesty, I never heard any lady read so well. In short, my Lord, you will not deserve such a wife, if once in your life you do not command. No man has a right to marry a muse and engross her. You must order her to appoint me her printer, nor will I be Harcourt Pursuivant if I am not their typographer too, but I have not said a word of my gratitude to Lady Harcourt; yes, I hope all this page has breathed it. To suppress a vast deal is the best proof of the rest.

I cannot quit such a society without begging a thousand compliments to Miss Fauquier, who merits such friends, and who does as much honour to their choice as they do to her. But in truth, I am come back in such raptures, that I doubt whether I am not rather drunk with self-love, than an enthusiast to the virtues and good sense resident at Nuneham. Well! we shall see. When you are all three given up for fools, &c., &c., &c., I will allow that I was an old idiot to be so blind. Till then, allow me to be passionately (a fig for high regard and perfect esteem) your Lordship's and Lady Harcourt's, ay, and Miss Fauquier's

Most devoted,

Hor. Walpole.

Mem. The letter to myself when I shall be fifty is not finished. Till that is perfect, Lady Harcourt will not be.

1894. To the Earl of Orford.

My dear Lord, Strawberry Hill, Oct. 5, 1778.

Your Lordship is very good in thanking me for what I could not claim any thanks, as in complying with your request, and assisting you to settle your affairs, according to my father's will, was not only my duty, but to promote your service and benefit, to re-establish the affairs of my family, and to conform myself to the views of the excellent man, the glory of human nature, who made us all what we are, has been constantly one of the principal objects of my whole life. If my labours and wishes have been crowned with small success, it has been owing to my own inability in the first place, and next to tenderness, and to the dirt and roguery of wretches below my notice. For your Lordship, I may presume to say, I have spared no thought, industry, solicitude, application, or even health, when I had the care of your affairs. What I did, and could have done, and should have done, if you had not thought fit to prefer a most conceited and worthless fellow, I can demonstrate by reams of paper, that may, one day or other, prove what I say; and which, if I have not yet done, it proceeds from the same tenderness that I have ever had for your Lordship's tranquillity and repose. To acquiesce afterwards in the arrangement you have proposed to me, is small merit indeed. My honour is much dearer to me than fortune, and to contribute to your Lordship's enjoying your fortune with credit and satisfaction, is a point I would have purchased with far greater compliances; for, my Lord, as I flatter myself that I am not thought an interested

man, so all who know me know, that to see the lustre of my family restored to the consideration to which it was raised by Sir Robert Walpole, shining in you, and transmitted to his and your descendants, was the only ambition that ever actuated me. No personal advantage entered into those views; and if I say thus much of myself with truth, I owe still greater justice to my brother, who has many more virtues than I can pretend to, and is as incapable of forming any mean and selfish wishes as any man upon earth. We are both old men now, and without sons to inspire us with future visions. We wish to leave your Lordship in as happy and respectable situation as you were born to, and we have both given you all the proof in our power, by acquiescing in your proposal immediately.

For me, my Lord, I should with pleasure accept the honour of waiting on you at Houghton at the time you mention, if my lameness and threats of the gout did not forbid my taking so long a journey at this time of the year. At sixty-one, it would not become me to talk of another year: perhaps I may never go to Houghton again, till I go thither for ever; but without affectation of philosophy, even the path to that journey will be sweetened to me, if I leave Houghton the flourishing monument of one of the best ministers that ever blest this once flourishing country.

I am, my dear Lord,
Yours most affectionately,
HOR. WALPOLE[1].

LETTER 1894.—[1] Written in reply to the following (both letters first printed by C.):—

'Eriswell, Oct. 1, 1778.

'SIR,

'I write one line to thank you for your ready concurrence in the measures I am now pursuing to settle the affairs of the family, and to satisfy Sir Robert Walpole's creditors; and beg leave to trouble you to make my compliments, and to return my thanks also to Sir Edward.

'If you have a mind to revisit

1895. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 8, 1778.

As you are so earnest for news, I am concerned when I have not a paragraph to send you. It looks as if distance augmented your apprehensions; for, I assure you, at home we have lost almost all curiosity. Though the two fleets have been so long at sea, and though, before their last *sortie*, one heard nothing but 'What news of the fleets?' of late there has been scarce any inquiry; and so the French one is returned to Brest, and ours is coming home. Admiral Keppel is very unlucky in having missed them, for they had not above twenty-five ships. Letters from Paris say their camps, too, are to break up at the end of this month: but we do not intend to be the dupes of that *finesse*, if it is one, but shall remain on our guard. One must hope that winter will produce some negotiation; and that, peace. Indeed, as war is not declared, I conclude there is always some treating on the anvil; and, should it end well, at least this age will have made a step towards humanity, in omitting the ceremonial of proclamation, which seems to make it easier to cease being at war. But I am rather making out a proxy for a letter than sending you news. But, you see, even armies of hundred thousands in Germany can execute as little as we; and you must remember what the Grand Condé, or the great Prince of Orange,—I forget which,—said, that unmarried girls imagine husbands are always doing duty, unmilitary men that soldiers are always fight-

your Penates again, and to see the alterations I am making in both fronts (I will not call them improvements), I shall be extremely glad to have your company at Houghton, on Monday fortnight, the 19th of October, where I purpose staying a week.

'I am, Sir, with great regard,
'Your most obedient and
'Humble servant,
'Orford.'

ing. One of the Duke of Marlborough's generals dining with the Lord Mayor, an alderman that sat next to him said, 'Sir, yours must be a very laborious profession.'—'No,' replied the general, 'we fight about four hours in the morning, and two or three after dinner, and then we have all the rest of the day to ourselves.'

The King has been visiting camps,—and so has Sir William Howe, who, one should think, had had enough of them; and who, one should think too, had not achieved such exploits as should make him fond of parading himself about, or expect many hosannahs. To have taken one town, and retreated from two, is not very glorious in military arithmetic; and to have marched twice to Washington, and returned without attacking him, is no addition to the sum total.

Did I tell you that Mrs. Anne Pitt is returned, and acts great grief for her brother? I suppose she was the dupe of the farce acted by the two Houses and the court, and had not heard that none of them carried on the pantomime even to his burial. Her nephew [1] gave a little into that mummery even to me; forgetting how much I must remember of his aversion to his uncle. Lord Chatham was a meteor, and a glorious one; people discovered that he was not a genuine luminary, and yet everybody in mimicry has been an *ignis fatuus* about him. Why not allow his magnificent enterprises and good fortune, and confess his defects; instead of being bombast in his praises, and at the same time discover that the amplification is insincere? A minister that inspires great actions must be a great minister; and Lord Chatham will always appear so,—by comparison with his predecessors and successors. He retrieved our affairs when ruined by a most incapable administration; and we are fallen into a worse state since he was removed. Therefore, I doubt,

LETTER 1895.—[1] Mr. Thomas Pitt. *Walpole.*

posterity will allow more to his merit, than it is the present fashion to accord to it. Our historians have of late been fond of decrying Queen Elizabeth, in order if possible to raise the Stuarts: but great actions surmount foibles; and folly and guilt would always remain folly and guilt, though there had never been a great man or woman in the world. Our modern tragedies, hundreds of them do not contain a good line; nor are they a jot the better, because Shakespeare, who was superior to all mankind, wrote some whole plays that are as bad as any of our present writers.

I shall be very glad to see your nephew, and talk of you with him; which will be more satisfactory than questioning accidental travellers.

This letter will prove to you that I am attentive to your anxiety as well as to your information; but pray, let it remind you, when you do not hear from me, that I have nothing material to tell you. It is idle to send three pages of trifling so far!

1896. To Earl Harcourt.

Arlington Street, Oct. 9, 1778.

Though I received so very kind a letter from your Lordship this morning, I should have been too modest to answer it, if Lady Laura[1] had not told me last night of Lady Harcourt's obliging commands to her to make me escort her. I should gladly obey that and your Lordship's friendly hint, were it in my power; but I am come to town this morning on disagreeable business with my brother, which will cost me some hundreds of pounds, a clerk in our joint office having chosen to dispose of some money entrusted to him *à la Maccaroni*; and it will tax my time for some days, as well as my purse. But you shall hear no more of it, for

Letter 1896.—[1] Lady Laura Waldegrave.

I do not take the loss of money enough to heart to draw on my friends for their pity. If I could wait on you at Nuneham, you would not find I have much occasion for consolation.

You do not think, I trust, my dear Lord, that I took the opportunity of your asking for my fourth volume, to thrust another old thing upon you. Lady Harcourt ordered me to send her the tragedy, and I suppose I forgot to say so. All I have to say of the play is, that Mr. Mason could write a much better, if he would. I can prove what I say, for with the alteration of a few words, and with the addition of a few lines, he made my tragedy fit for the stage, if the rest of it is so. It was one of the most masterly feats ever performed, but I need not do *him* justice to your Lordship. I only mention it that you may not hesitate to set him to work on any little corrections that Lady Harcourt's poems may want, the faults of which are evidence of the facility with which she writes. Your Lordship is so tender of her honour, that I see you promote her bashfulness instead of giving her courage; but I hope Mr. Mason's judgement will encourage you both; he is no flatterer, I will swear, and when you have the imprimatur of Apollo's own licenser of the press, shall I not flatter myself that my office of printer to Nuneham will no longer be a sinecure?

Lady Laura will give your Lordship an account of a fête I gave her and my other nieces last night. Strawberry really looked very pretty, though neither the prospect nor the painted glass had their share; but forgive me if I say that my nieces supplied these deficiencies. Lady Laura I doubt will miss the prospect still less when she comes from Nuneham. The Duchess is charmed with your Lordship's and Lady Harcourt's goodness to her daughters, which you find I was eager to trumpet, for after the very agreeable days I passed at Nuneham myself, it was natural to wish that my niece should be as happy; so your Lordship should

be upon your guard, and not to be too indulgent to me, since I cannot help on all occasions being

Your most grateful and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

1897. To EARL HARCOURT.

I TRUST I need not say how happy and honoured I am whenever your Lordship is so good as to give me any commands. I must then be as unhappy when I cannot obey them immediately. I have kept your servant while I hunted for the *treillage* paper, but I cannot find it. I flatter myself I carried it to Strawberry, whither I go to-morrow and shall search for it—but I fear! It had laid here in an empty room two years. I have an imperfect notion of having lent a bit or the whole piece to somebody, whom I cannot recollect certainly, but think it was Lady Aylesbury, whom I will ask about it. In short, your Lordship may depend upon my recovering it if possible. I only know it was ill done, for the roses were not interlaced among the *bâtons*, but seemed tacked against them, which had I had it executed here, I intended should be corrected; however, I shall be exceedingly vexed if I do not find the original.

Your Lordship's most devoted,

H. WALPOLE.

1898. To EARL HARCOURT.

MY DEAR LORD,

I have hunted in vain at Strawberry for the *treillage* paper, and cannot find it; I must have lent it to somebody that has forgotten it as well as I. I am vexed, though I hope the bower will not suffer by it, and that it will give jealousy to Queen Eleanor still, or to King Eleanor.

1899. To the Rev. William Mason.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 11, 1778.

A thousand thanks for the trouble you have given yourself, and the information [1] you have sent me; it fully satisfies me, at least till my next visit to Nuneham. I own there is an idea in the play you describe, which, had it come into my hand, I should certainly have adopted;—the mother's intention of meeting her own husband and not her son. However as you have, by a *coup de baguette*, obviated the shocking part, I trouble myself no farther. I never had any difficulty of adopting your corrections, but because my original view was to paint the height of repentance for real guilt; whereas any palliative admits a degree of weakness in the Countess, and makes her rather superstitious or delicate, than penitent upon reason. But however, as I am tired of the subject, I will not tire you upon it. If ever the play is acted, it must be with your improvements, which I will print with it. So I will whether it is acted or not; for such marks of your genius should not be lost, though you want not other proofs; and it will please me to have furnished you with the materials. I grow tired to death of my own things, and hate to talk of them.

Lady Laura, who carries this, will tell you how many accidents prevent my obeying Lord and Lady Harcourt, and accompanying her. I have lost near 700*l.* by a clerk, and I am on Tuesday to sign a family compact with my nephew, by which, some time or other, I shall get the fortune my father left me, which I never expected; so the balance of events is in my favour, and then the deuce is in it if I am to be pitied.

Letter 1899.—[1] Mason had mentioned an old play with a plot resembling that of Horace Walpole's tragedy, *The Mysterious Mother*.

Lady Laura will describe to you a most brilliant fête that I gave her and her sisters and cousins last Thursday. People may say what they will, but splendid as it was, I am not of opinion that this *festival of nieces* was absolutely the most charming show that ever was seen. I believe the entertainment given by the Queen of the Amazons to the King of Mauritania in the Castle of Ice, and the ball made for the Princess of Persia by the Duke of Sparta in the Saloon of Roses, were both of them more delightful, especially as the contrast of the sable Africans with the shining whiteness of the Thracian heroines, and the opposition between the nudity of the Lacedæmonian generals and the innumerable folds of linen in the drapery of the Persian ladies, must have been more singular than all the marvels in the Castle of Strawberry last Thursday. To be sure, the illumination of the gallery surpassed the Palace of the Sun; and when its fretted ceiling, which you know is richer than the roof of Paradise, opened for the descent of Mrs. Clive in the full moon, nothing could be more striking. The circular drawing-room was worthy of the presence of Queen Bess, as many of the old ladies, who remember her, affirmed; and the high altar in the tribune was fitter for a Protestant king's hearing mass than the chapel at Lord Petre's. The tapestry bed in the great chamber looked gorgeous (though it had not an escutcheon of pretence like the Duchess of Chandos's while her father and brother are living) and was ready strewed with roses for a hymeneal; but alas! there was the misfortune of the solemnity!

Though my nieces looked as well as the Houris, notwithstanding I was disappointed of the house of North to set them off, and though I had sent out one hundred and thirty cards, in this region there are no swains who are under my own almost climacteric. I had three Jews of Abraham's standing, and seven Sarahs who still talk of the second

Temple. The rest of the company were dowagers and maidens, with silver beards down to their girdles; Henry and Frances, whose doves have long done laying; the curate of the parish; Briscoe, the second-hand silversmith; and Lady Greenwich in a riding-dress, for she came on her own broom. You may perhaps think that some of the company were not quite of dignity adequate to such a high festival, but they were just the persons made the most happy by being invited: and as the haughtiest peers stoop to be civil to shopkeepers before an election, I did not see why I should not do, out of good nature, what the proudest so often do out of interest. I do not mention two ancient generals, because they have not been beaten out of America into red ribands; nor a Judge Perryn[2], who had solicited me to invite his daughters, and brought them on my sending a very civil card, and yet did not so much as write an answer or thank me—but I really believe it was from mere stupidity. If I could grudge your staying at Nuneham, I should regret your not being here in such noble weather. Come, however, as soon as you can and stay as long.

By the rise of the stocks, and the wonderful hide-and-seek of the fleets, I suspect some treaty is brewing: it cannot be so scandalous but it will go down; and therefore it cannot be worse than the nation deserves. If anything prevents it, it will be the declaration of the Spanish Ambassador, that King Carlos will never acknowledge the independence of America till King George does, which I suppose the latter will not do, if even the King of Monomatapa or the King of Mechlemberg will encourage him to go on. Besides it is a heavenly sight to see soldiers, and not see an enemy! and a more heavenly sight to see a puppet-show, and to lock up one's son[3], who is of an age to enjoy one!—

[2] Sir Richard Perryn, Knight (1723–1803), Baron of the Exchequer.
[3] The Prince of Wales.

and yet what command of one's passions to put off a review for a christening!—what pity gazettes-extraordinary were not in fashion, when two shillings were issued out of the Exchequer to Jack of Reading, for getting on the table and making the King sport. This was in the reign of Edward II, and is only recorded in a *computus* still extant. Adieu.

1900. To the Rev. William Cole.

Oct. 14, 1778.

I think you take in no newspapers, nor I believe condescend to read any more modern than the *Paris à la Main* at the time of the *Ligue*—consequently you have not seen a new scandal on my father, which you will not wonder offends me. You cannot be interested in his defence; but, as it comprehends some very curious anecdotes, you will not grudge my indulging myself to a friend in vindicating a name so dear to me.

In the accounts of Lady Chesterfield's death and fortune, it is said that the late King, at the instigation of Sir R. W., burnt his father's will, which contained a large legacy to that, his supposed, daughter, and, I believe, his real one: for she was very like him; as her brother, General Schulembourg, is, in black, to the late King. The fact of suppressing the will is indubitably true; the instigator most false, as I can demonstrate thus.

When the news arrived of the death of George the First, my father carried the account from Lord Townshend to the then Prince of Wales. One of the first acts of royalty is for the new monarch to make a speech to the Privy Council. Sir Robert asked the King who he would please to have draw the Speech, which was, in fact, asking who was to be Prime Minister. His Majesty replied, Sir Spencer Compton. It is a wonderful anecdote, and little known,

that the new Premier, a very dull man, could not draw the Speech, and the person to whom he applied was—the deposed Premier. The Queen, who favoured my father, observed how unfit a man was for successor, who was reduced to beg assistance of his predecessor. The Council met as soon as possible, the next morning at latest. There Archbishop Wake, with whom one copy of the will had been deposited (as another was, I think, with the Duke of Wolfenbuttle[1], who had a pension for sacrificing it, which, *I know*, the late Duke of Newcastle transacted), advanced, and delivered the will to the King, who put it into his pocket, and went out of Council without opening it, the Archbishop not having courage or presence of mind to desire it to be read, as he ought to have done.

These circumstances, which I solemnly assure you are strictly true, prove that my father neither advised, nor was consulted; nor is it credible that the King in one night's time should have passed from the intention of disgracing him, to make him his bosom confidant on so delicate an affair.

I was once talking to the late Lady Suffolk, the former mistress, on that extraordinary event. She said, 'I cannot justify the deed to the legatees, but towards his father the late King was justifiable: for George the First had burnt two wills made in favour of George the Second.' I suppose they were the testaments of the Duke and Duchess of Zell[2], parents of George the First's wife, whose treatment of her they always resented.

I said, *I know* the transactions of the D. of N.[3] The late Lord Waldegrave showed me a letter from that Duke to the first Earl of Waldegrave, then Ambassador at Paris, with directions about that transaction, or, at least, about payment

LETTER 1900.—[1] Augustus William, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel; d. 1731.

[2] George William, Duke of Lüneburg-Celle; his wife was a Frenchwoman, Eléonore, daughter of Alexandre d'Olbreuse.

[3] The Duke of Newcastle.

of the pension, I forget which. I have somewhere, but cannot turn to it now, a memorandum of that affair, and who the Prince was, whom I may mistake in calling Duke of Wolfenbuttle. There was a third copy of the will, I likewise forget with whom deposited. The newspaper says, which is true, that Lord Chesterfield filed a bill in Chancery against the late King, to oblige him to produce the will, and was silenced, I think, by payment of 20,000*l*. There was another legacy to his own daughter, the Queen of Prussia, which has at times been, and, I believe, is still claimed by the King of Prussia.

Do not mention any part of this story, but it is worth preserving, as I am sure you are satisfied with my scrupulous veracity. It may perhaps be authenticated hereafter by collateral evidence that may come out. If ever true history does come to light, my father's character will have just honour paid to it. Lord Chesterfield, one of his sharpest enemies, has not, with all his prejudices, left a very unfavourable account of him, and it would alone be raised by comparison of their two characters. Think of one who calls Sir Robert the corrupter of youth, leaving a system of education to poison them from their nursery! Chesterfield, Pulteney, and Bolinbroke were the saints that reviled my father!

I beg your pardon, but you allow me to open my heart to you when it is full. Yours ever,

H. W.

1901. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Oct. 23, 1778.

. . . . . Having thus told you all I know, I shall add a few words, to say I conclude you have known as much, by my not having heard from you. Should the Post Office

or Secretary's Office set their wits at work to bring to light all the intelligence contained under the above hiatus, I am confident they will discover nothing, though it gives an exact description of all they have been about themselves.

My personal history is very short. I have had an assembly and the rheumatism—and am buying a house—and it rains—and I shall plant the roses against my *treillage* to-morrow. Thus you know what I have done, suffered, am doing, and shall do. Let me know as much of you, in quantity, not in quality. Introductions to, and conclusions of, letters are as much out of fashion, as *to*, *at*, &c., on letters. This sublime age reduces everything to its quintessence: all periphrases and expletives are so much in disuse, that I suppose soon the only way of making love will be to say 'Lie down.' Luckily, the lawyers will not part with any synonymous words, and will, consequently, preserve the redundancies of our language,—*Dixi.*

1902. To the Rev. William Cole.

Oct. 26, 1778.

Mr. Kerrich[1] shall have a ticket, dear Sir, to see Strawberry whenever he wishes for it next spring.

I have finished the Life of Mr. Baker, will have it transcribed, and send it to you. I have omitted several little particulars that are in your notes, for two reasons: one, because so much is said in the *Biographia*; and the other, because I have rather drawn a character of him, than meant a circumstantial life. In the justice I have done to him, I trust I shall have pleased you. I have much greater doubt of that effect in what I have said of his principles and party. It is odd, perhaps, to have made

Letter 1902. — [1] Rev. Thomas Kerrich (1748-1828), Fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge, an antiquary and artist. He was elected Librarian of the University of Cambridge in 1797.

use of the life of a High Churchman for expatiating on my own very opposite principles, but it gave me so fair an opportunity of discussing those points, that I very naturally embraced it. I have done due honour to his immaculate conscience, but have not spared the cause in which he fell, or rather rose, for the ruin of his fortune was the triumph of his virtue.

As you know I do not love the press, you may be sure I have no thoughts of printing this Life at present; nay, I beg you will not only not communicate it, but take care it never should be printed without my consent. I have written what presented itself; I should perhaps choose to soften several passages; and I trust it to you for your own satisfaction, not as a finished thing, or as I am determined it should remain.

Another favour I beg of you, is to criticize it as largely and severely as you please. You have a right so to do, as it is built with your own materials; nay, you have a right to scold if I have, nay, since I have, employed them so differently from your intention. All my excuse is, that you communicated them to one who did not deceive you, and who, you was pretty sure, would make nearly the use of them that he has made. Was not you? did not you suspect a little that I could not even write a Life of Mr. Baker without talking Whiggism!—well, if I have ill-treated the cause, I am sure I have exalted the martyr. I have thrown new light on his virtue from his notes on the *Gazettes*, and you will admire him more, though you may love me less, for my chymistry. I should be truly sorry if I did lose a scruple of your friendship. You have ever been as candid to me as Mr. Baker was to his antagonists, and our friendship is another proof that men of the most opposite principles can agree in everything else, and not quarrel about them.

As my MS. contains above twenty pages of my writing on larger paper than this, you cannot receive it speedily— however, I have performed my promise, and I hope you will not be totally discontent, though I am not satisfied with myself. I have executed it by snatches and with long interruptions; and not having been eager about it, I find I wanted that ardour to inspire me; another proof of what I told you, that my small talent is waning, and wants provocatives. It shall be a warning to me. Adieu!

P.S. I have long had a cast of one part of the great seal of Queen Henrietta, that you mention, as you may find in the Catalogue of Strawberry, in the green closet. It is her figure under a canopy.

1903. To the Hon. Thomas Walpole.

Dear Sir, Arlington Street, Oct. 26, 1778.

On coming to town to-day I found a most magnificent and beautiful book[1], and a letter as generous and beautiful. I am ashamed to accept the one, and cannot pretend to answer the other, and when I cannot contend with you in generosity, I am sure I will not in words. Still, I am sorry to deprive you of so fine and rare a book, nor can possess it without regret at your expense. All I can do is to give you a thousand thanks; and I owe you still more for your son's[2] visit, which gave me the greatest pleasure. He is so sensible, modest, and natural that I wish Strawberry Hill could have more attractions for him. I shall be

Letter 1903. — Not in C.; reprinted from *Some Unpublished Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Sir Spencer Walpole, pp. 12-13.

[1] Apparently a book on shells, published in Denmark. This book is mentioned in the letter to Thomas Walpole the younger of June 26, 1792.

[2] The younger Thomas Walpole (1755-1840), subsequently a correspondent of Horace Walpole. He was Envoy at Munich (at the court of the Elector Palatine) 1783-88.

in town till Thursday, if you should come this way. I would call on you rather, but must wait here for people of business, being come on the purchase of a house[3]: but I long to thank you in person for all your favours to

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

1904. To SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Oct. 30, 1778.

PRAY allow that I am a miracle of attention, when I have the courage to begin a letter that is, I know, to contain little or nothing, and which is the quintessence of two very long *Gazettes*. We had been amused with a notion that Lord Howe was blocking up M. D'Estaing in Boston, and would certainly take him and his whole fleet. Lest we should build too much on that idea, Lord Howe himself arrived on Monday, having taken nothing—but his leave. Being modest, he owns that he had no mind to encounter the French squadron. A violent storm solved his difficulties, and dispersed both fleets. The Americans, deprived of their allies, quitted Rhode Island; and then Sir Harry Clinton raised a contribution of ten thousand sheep and some oxen, which intimates a little want of provisions. However, these escapes have raised our spirits so much, that we are going to send twelve thousand men more to America, where they may banquet on mutton. Still, as it is good to have two strings to our bow, though Governor Johnstone is returned, the other two Commissioners remain to make peace, to which we are told the Americans are disposed; a proof of which is our sending another army thither.

[3] No. 11 Berkeley Square. The deed of assignment, dated March 25, 1780, is in the hands of Mr. Vernon Watney, the owner of the house.

Admiral Keppel is returned to Portsmouth, and the Brest squadron is again at sea; taking it by turns to take an airing.

One advantage we certainly have, having taken to the value of two millions in prizes; on the strength of which we shall fling away above double that sum. But we never proposed to be gainers by the war: we had nothing to do, and so we played against ourselves.

The Duke of Queensberry is dead, at fourscore; and leaves a great estate to Lord March, the new Duke. There is a much more melancholy loss, the death of Lord Lincoln. He was sent abroad at the last gasp, and died two posts from Calais. You know he married one of my cousins, a daughter of Lord Hertford. She is a very pretty, sensible, amiable young woman, and passionately fond of him. She returned last night with the body.

I came to town on Monday for a day or two, and have been caught by the gout in my foot; but it is very slight, and with very little pain, so that I hope it will be of short duration. It is amazing what the bootikins have done for me by diminishing the mass of gout. I have had no fit for near two years, and the three last were very inconsiderable. As I have worn the bootikins constantly every night ever since my great fit, it is demonstration how serviceable they are to me at least.

Mrs. Anne Pitt, I hear, is in a very wild way, and they think must be confined. She is not the only one I know that ought to be,—but I hold my peace. Indeed, in this country it would be partiality to shut up only one or two here and there.

I make no excuse for being so short. I am tired of lamenting; and still live, I doubt, to see the completion of all the ruin I have foreseen,—and then one has lived too long!

1905. To the Rev. William Cole.

Arlington Street, Nov. 4, 1778.

You will see by my secretary's hand that I am not able to write myself, indeed, I am in bed with the gout in six places, like Daniel in the den, but as the lions are slumbering round me, and leave me a moment of respite, I employ it to give you one. You have misunderstood me, dear Sir. I have not said a word that will lower Mr. Baker's character; on the contrary, I think he will come out brighter from my ordeal. In truth, as I have drawn out his life from your papers, it is a kind of political epic, in which his conscience is the hero that always triumphs over his interest upon the most opposite occasions. Shall you dislike your saint in this light?

I had transcribed about half when I fell ill last week. If the gout does not seize my right hand, I shall probably have full leisure to finish it during my recovery, but shall certainly not be able to send it to you by Mr. Lort.

Your promise fully satisfies me. My life can never extend to twenty years. Any one that saw me this moment would not take me for a Methuselem. I have not strength to dictate more now, except to add, that if Mr. Nickolls has seen my narrative about Chatterton, it can only be my letter to Mr. Beverley[1], of which you have a copy: the larger one has not yet been out of my own house. I am, dear Sir, yours most sincerely,

H. W.

P.S. I forgot to say, that you shall certainly have every scrap of your MSS. carefully returned to you; and you will

Letter 1905. — [1] Printed 'Barrett' by C. Perhaps John Beverley (1743–1828), Esquire Bedell of Cambridge University.

find that I have barely sipped here and there, and exhausted nothing.

1906. To Lady Browne.

Arlington Street, Nov. 5, 1778.

Your Ladyship is exceedingly kind and charitable, and the least I can do in return is to do all I can—dictate a letter to you. I have not been out of bed longer than it was necessary to have it made, once a day, since last Thursday. The gout is in both my feet, both my knees, and in my left hand and elbow. Had I a mind to brag, I could boast of a little rheumatism too, but I scorn to set value on such a trifle; nay, I will own that I have felt little acute pain. My chief propensity to exaggeration would be on the miserable nights I have passed; and yet whatever I should say would not be beyond what I thought I suffered. I have been constantly as broad awake as any Mrs. Candour that is always gaping for scandal, except when I have taken opiates, and then my dreams have been as extravagant as all Mrs. Candour adds to what she hears. In short, Madam, not to tire you with more details, though you have ordered them, I am so weak that I am able to see nobody at all, and when I shall be recovered enough to take possession of this new lease, as it is called, the mansion, I believe, will be so shattered that it won't be worth repairs. Is it not very foolish, then, to be literally buying a new house? Is it not verifying Pope's line, when I choose a pretty situation

> But just to look about us, and to die?

I am sorry Lady Jane's lot is fallen in Westphalia, where so great a hog is lord of the manor. He is like the dragon of Wantley,

And houses and churches
To him are geese and turkeys;

so I don't wonder that he has gobbled her two cows.

Lady Blandford is delightful in congratulating me upon having the gout in town, and staying in the country herself. Nay, she is very insolent in presuming to be the only person invulnerable. If I could wish her any harm, it should be that she might feel for one quarter of an hour a taste of the mortifications that I suffered from eleven last night till four this morning, and I am sure she would never dare to have a spark of courage again. I can only wish her in Grosvenor Square, where she would run no risks. Her reputation for obstinacy is so well established, that she might take advice from her true friends for a twelvemonth, before we should believe her own ears. However, as everybody has some weak part, I know she will do for others more than for herself; and therefore, pray, Madam, tell her, that I am sure it is bad for your Ladyship to stay in the country at this time of year, and that reason I am sure will bring you both. I really must rest.

1907. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Nov. 16, 1778.

I think I luckily wrote to you just as I was seized with the gout, and told you so. I am sure I have not been able to write since, for I am confined to my bed; and have been above this fortnight with the gout in every hand, elbow, knee, and foot belonging to me, and not one of the eight is yet recovered. This is so terrible a state to suffer, and so tiresome to hear for anybody else, that I shall say as little upon it as possible. There is no danger in it: in every other light it is deplorable.

This confinement has cost you no news but the loss of

Dominica[1]; and you saw as much of that in the newspaper, at least, as I could tell you. I have this moment received yours of the 27th of last month, in which you again petition for good news, that you may silence the impertinent buzzes in your part of the world; but in truth I don't know how you will stop their throats, but by the quantity and richness of the captures made from the French. The King's Speech, I doubt, must have great recourse to the same anodyne. Nothing of consequence has been done anywhere, by fleets or armies; and the notion is, that our own returned commanders are likely to be warmer with one another, than they have been with the enemy: but, indeed, I believe reports of what is to come still less than what is past, neither of which have I for some time seen come to anything:—then it is not difficult to foresee the consequence.

I am surprised at the Hibernian family[2] you mention being arrived at Florence so soon: you are very welcome to show them as many civilities as you please, and set them down to my account; but do not receive everything they say of me as coming from the heart. They know your partiality to me, and they mean to pass their time everywhere as agreeably as they can. For the other lady[3], and her daughter Chance, be doubly upon your guard against the mother. There is nothing so black of which she is not capable. Her gallantries are the whitest specks about her.

I have heard nothing of your nephew's arrival; but shall be very impatient when he does come to see him, as soon

LETTER 1907. — [1] Dominica surrendered to the French, under the Marquis de Bouillé, in September 1778.

[2] Lord and Lady Lucan and their daughters, who were in Florence at this time.

[3] Elizabeth Drax, Countess-Dowager of Berkeley, afterwards married to Robert Nugent, Esq., since created Earl of Clare. During her latter marriage she had two daughters, the younger of whom Mr. Nugent disavowed for his. The elder was married to the second Earl Temple. *Walpole.*

as I can see anybody. I shall long to hear his accounts of you, and good accounts of you; at least, I shall not hear that you are little more than a mummy, as I am. Adieu!

1908. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Nov. 27, 1778.

In my present situation, lying on a couch in my bedchamber, with not a single limb free but my left hand, I certainly did not expect any singular pleasure to-day; and yet I had the very great and unexpected one of seeing your nephew, who, though another, is a true Sir Horace. He had called here a few days ago, when I was able to see scarce anybody; and, not being expected, he was not admitted. I was heartily chagrined, and did not know whither to send to him. He was so kind as to come again to-day, when you may be sure he was not refused. As I can only dictate, I must retrench a thousand things I would say; but one word will paint my contentment with him. He loves you as much as he would have loved his father, if he had known him as well. Indeed, it is the same thing: as I told him, there were two you's or two he's. Your nephew says he would not but visit you every year for the world, which you may be sure I did not discourage; though I must naturally wish just the reverse, i. e. that you should visit him, at least for once. He tells me you are very plump and portly, and in most admirable health. Poor young man! he had a little gout in one foot, and I presented but a sad perspective to him. But I begged him not to bring the gout into his stomach, by being persuaded to keep it out by strong wines. Though I have been so often afflicted with severe fits for these twenty years, I never had it but one half-hour in my head, and never once in my stomach. In this fit, though I kept

my bed within three days of a month, perspired immoderately and almost constantly, yet I drank nothing but cold water the whole time; and every morning as soon as I wake, have my face and neck washed with cold water. No fit ever came so rapidly and regularly, nor went off more kindly—thanks to the bootikins, and to cold water and air; which two last, I am persuaded by long experience, will never hurt *me*, though very likely my system would kill a Hercules, who all his life had kept up a fiery furnace in his stomach. For your nephew, he seems to have acquired the only thing he wanted, and which was very excusable to want at his age,—prudence. And he feels it still more on your account than his own.

I beg the nation's, but not your pardon, for indulging myself in giving the precedence to your nephew.—Now for the other.

Our Parliament opened yesterday. The Speech did not display very promising prospects, but the debates and events in neither House were remarkable: prodigious bickerings were expected between the generals, admirals, commissioners, and ministers; but some of the points in contestation were alone touched, and nothing probed, though probably only deferred.

It is said and believed, that Sir Harry Clinton had embarked a body of troops for our West Indian islands, but has disembarked them again; so the merchants concerned in those islands are in the highest alarms. Spain, I doubt, grows less and less to be depended upon; and the French party in Holland have carried some strong questions against our seizure of their ships, though we have offered reasonable indemnification. In short, I have neither good news nor good prognostics to send you. All these things are public; and secrets I should not utter even to you at this distance, if I knew any.

You shall hear again as soon as I am able to write, or sooner if there is anything material to send you. Your nephew will help me out; though in the hurry of a fresh arrival, and with his attendance on Parliament, you cannot justly expect him to be very punctual at first, till he is got *en train*: however, I am sure his heart will not let him be remiss. Adieu!

1909. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Dec. 18, 1778.

Having so many lonely vacant hours (if pain leaves vacancy), I should seem unpardonable in having left such a chasm in our correspondence, when I know you extremely impatient for news. Solitary hours, to be sure, I have had innumerable, even in my best intervals; for fashion has pushed the day so far into the night, that I have been forced to conform my sick regularity a little to the watches of the town, and dine later than I choose, or dine in public: for nobody will make me a morning's visit before two in the afternoon, nor leave me to go home to dress for dinner before four. They come not again till eight or nine at night, when they would keep me out of bed till twelve, if I would let them.

But I have had more grievous reasons for not writing; though free from pain for this week, I have not yet at all recovered the use of my right hand. But I have had a more serious and more dangerous complaint, and the consequence of my gout; such a weakness in my breast, that an inflammation on it was apprehended, and I was absolutely forbidden to see company, or even speak, which I must do to dictate. This codicil to my gout, I confess, was owing to this my second childhood; in short, my spirits ran away with me, and I talked without ceasing.

Even a child is cunning enough to make excuses: mine was, that I could have gone about the town for three days without speaking three words, for I might not have met with three persons to whom I wished to speak; but in my own room, where I see nobody but those I choose to see, and many friends whom I had not seen for six months, one must have the continent tongue of Lord Abercorn[1] in the breeches of Scipio to be silent. Well! I am recovered of that danger, and am recovering of all the rest; and you shall now hear no more of me, who am not politics, which are what you want to know.

Of them I know not what to write. The Parliament is unshaken, though it has had rough concussions. The rash proclamation[2] in America alarmed much, and I fear will have bitter consequences: but all is swallowed up by the new court martial on Admiral Keppel; as rash an act in its kind, and the deed, it is said, of that black man Sir Hugh Palliser alone[3]. Its consequences may be many, various, and fatal; but I neither love to foresee, nor to spread misfortunes of my country, when my letter must pass through the ordeal of as many hostile post-houses as formerly gallant ladies passed over burning plough-shares,—let us talk rather of gallant ladies—but no, I hate scandal; and, besides, our greatest dames are no longer gallant, but errant street-walkers, and I have never promised to send you the register of Doctors' Commons: our news-writers are the proper secretaries of that tribunal, and with all their infamous propensity to lying can scarce outstrip the truth.

What I have long apprehended is on the point of conclusion, the sale of the pictures at Houghton. The mad

Letter 1909.—[1] James Hamilton, eighth Earl of Abercorn, remarkable for his taciturnity. *Walpole.*

[2] A threatening proclamation of General Clinton, who had been provoked by the non-performance of the Convention concluded at Saratoga.

[3] Palliser applied for a court martial on Keppel for misconduct and neglect of duty during the indecisive action of July 27, 1778.

master has sent his final demand of forty-five thousand pounds for them to the Empress of Russia, at the same time that he has been what he calls improving the outside of the house; *basta!* Thus end all my visions about Houghton, which I never will *see*, though I must go thither at last; nor, if I can help it, think of more.

Your old acquaintance, Mr. Worseley[4], is dead, and in a shocking way to us moderns, though *à la romaine*: he had such dreadful internal complaints, that he determined to starve himself, and for the four last days tasted exactly nothing.

My newly recovered voice will not permit me to dictate any longer: your nephew and the newspaper can tell you as much more as I could. If I have any judgement, which I doubt, the tragedy is coming rather to the fifth act than to the conclusion. Hitherto the drama has been carried on by relation, or—behind the scenes; now the *dénouement* may be on the stage. Adieu! I am quite tired.

1910. To Lady Browne.

Arlington Street, Dec. 18, 1778.

My not writing with my own hand, to thank your Ladyship for your very obliging letter, is the worst symptom that remains with me, Madam: all pain and swelling are gone; and I hope in a day or two to get a glove even on my right hand, and to walk with help into the next room by the end of next week. I did, I confess, see a great deal too much company too early; and was such an old child as to prattle abundantly, till I was forced to shut myself up for a week and see nobody; but I am quite recovered, and the emptiness of the town will soon preserve me from any excesses.

[4] James Worseley, Master of the Board of Works. *Walpole.*

I am exceedingly glad to hear your Ladyship finds so much benefit from the air. I own I thought you looked ill the last time I had the honour of seeing you; and though I am sorry to hear you talk with so much satisfaction of a country life, I am not selfish enough to wish you to leave Tusmore[1] a day before your health is quite re-established, nor to envy Mr. Fermor so agreeable an addition to his society and charming seat.

Poor Lady Albemarle is indeed very miserable and full of apprehensions; though the incredible zeal of the navy for Admiral Keppel crowns him with glory, and the indignation of mankind, and the execration of Sir Hugh, add to the triumph. Indeed, I still think Lady Albemarle's fears may be well founded: some slur may be *procured* on her son; and his own bad nerves, and worse constitution, may not be able to stand agitation and suspense.

Lady Blandford has had a cold, but I hear is well again, and has generally two tables. She will be a loss indeed to all her friends, and to hundreds more; but she cannot be immortal, nor would be if she could.

The writings are not yet signed, Madam, for my house[2], but I am in no doubt of having it; yet I shall not think of going into it till the spring, as I cannot *enjoy* this year's gout in it, and will not venture catching a codicil, by going backwards and forwards to it before it is aired.

I know no particular news, but that Lord Bute was thought in great danger yesterday; I have heard nothing of him to-day. I do not know even a match, but of some that are going to be divorced; the fate of one of the latter is to be turned into an exaltation, and is treated by her family and friends in quite a new style, to the discomfit of

LETTER 1910. — [1] A seat of the Fermors in Oxfordshire.

[2] Horace Walpole's newly-purchased house in Berkeley Square, of which he took possession in October 1779.

all prudery. It puts me in mind of Lord Lansdowne's lines in the room in the Tower where my father had been confined,

Some fall so hard, they bound and rise again.

Methinks, however, it is a little hard on Lord George Germaine, that in four months after seeing a Duchess of Dorset, he may see a Lord Middlesex too; for so old the egg is said to be, that is already prepared. If this trade goes on, half the peeresses will have two eldest sons with both fathers alive at the same time. Lady Holdernesse expresses nothing but grief and willingness to receive her daughter[3] again on any terms, which probably will happen; for the daughter has already opened her eyes, is sensible of her utter ruin, and has written to Lord Carmarthen and Madam Cordon, acknowledging her guilt, and begging to be remembered only with pity, which is sufficient to make one pity her.

I would beg pardon for so long a letter, but your Ladyship desired intelligence, and I know a long letter from London is not uncomfortable at Christmas, even in the most comfortable house in the country. Perhaps my own forced idleness has a little contributed to lengthen it; still I hope it implies great readiness to obey your Ladyship's commands, in your most obedient humble servant.

1911. To the Earl of Buchan[1].

Arlington Street, Dec. 24, 1778.

It was an additional mortification to my illness, my Lord, that I was not able to thank your Lordship with my

[3] The Marchioness of Carmarthen. She eloped with Captain John Byron, and was divorced from her husband in May 1779.

Letter 1911.—Collated with original in British Museum.

[1] David Steuart Erskine (1742–1829), eleventh Earl of Buchan.

own hand for the honour of your letter, and for your goodness in remembering an old man, who must with reason consider himself as forgotten, when he never was of importance, and is now almost useless to himself. Frequent severe fits of the gout have a good deal disabled me from pursuing the trifling studies in which I could pretend to know anything; or at least have given me an indifference, that makes me less ready in answering questions than I may have been formerly; and as my papers are in the country, whither at present I am not able to go, I fear I can give but unsatisfactory replies to your Lordship's queries.

The two very curious pictures of King James[2] and his Queen (I cannot recollect whether the third or fourth of the name, but I know that she was a princess of Sweden or Denmark, and that her arms are on her portrait) were at the palace of Kensington, and I imagine are there still. I had obtained leave from the Lord Chamberlain to have drawings made of them, and Mr. Wale[3] actually began them for me; but he made such slow progress, and I was so called off from the thought of them by my indispositions and other avocations, that they were never finished; and Mr. Wale may, perhaps, still have the beginnings he made.

At the Duke of Devonshire's at Hardwicke, there is a valuable though poorly painted picture of James V and Mary of Guise, his second Queen; it is remarkable from the great resemblance of Mary Queen of Scots to her father; I mean in Lord Morton's picture of her, and in the image of her on her tomb at Westminster, which agree together, and which I take to be the genuine likeness. I have doubts on Lord Burlington's picture, and on Dr. Meade's. The nose in both is thicker, and also fuller at bottom

[2] King James III of Scotland; his wife was Margaret, daughter of Christian of Denmark.

[3] Samuel Wale (d. 1786), historical painter and Professor of Perspective at the Royal Academy.

than on the tomb; though it is a little supported by her coins.

There is a much finer portrait, indeed, an excellent head, of the Lady Margaret Douglas at Mr. Carteret's at Hawnes in Bedfordshire (the late Lord Granville's). It is a very shrewd countenance, and at the same time with great goodness of character.

Lord Scarborough has a good picture, in the style of Holbein at least, of Queen Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII, and of her second or third husband (for, if I don't mistake, she had three[4]); but, indeed, my Lord, these things are so much out of my memory at present, that I speak with great diffidence. I cannot even recollect anything else to your Lordship's purpose; but I flatter myself that these imperfect notices will at least be a testimony of my readiness to obey your Lordship's commands, and that I am, with great respect, my Lord,

Your Lordship's
Most obedient
Humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

1912. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 3, 1779.

At last, after ten weeks, I have been able to remove hither, in hopes change of air and the frost will assist my recovery; though I am not one of those ancients that forget the register, and think they are to be as well as ever after every fit of illness. As yet I can merely creep about the room in the middle of the day.

I have made my printer (now my secretary) copy out the

[4] She married (1) James IV of Scotland; (2) Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus; (3) Henry Stewart, Baron Methven.

rest of Mr. Baker's life; for my own hand will barely serve to write necessary letters, and complains even of them. If you know of any very trusty person passing between London and Cambridge, I would lend it to you, but should not care to trust it by the coach, nor to any giddy undergraduate that comes to town to see a play: and, besides, I mean to return you my own notes. I will say no more than I have said in apology to you for the manner in which I have written this life. With regard to Mr. Baker himself, I am confident you will find that I have done full justice to his worth and character—I do not expect you to approve the inferences I draw against some other persons—and yet, if his conduct was meritorious, it would not be easy to excuse those who were *active* after doing what he would not do. You will not understand this sentence till you have seen the life.

I hope you have not been untiled nor unpaled by the tempest on New Year's morning. I have lost two beautiful elms in a row before my windows here, and had the skylight demolished in town. Lady Pomfret's Gothic house in my street lost one of the stone towers, like those at King's Chapel, and it was beaten through the roof. The top of our cross, too, at Ampthill was thrown down, as I hear from Lady Ossory this morning. I remember to have been told that Bishop Kidder and his wife were killed in their bed in the palace at Gloucester in 1709[1], and yet his heirs were sued for dilapidations.

Lord de Ferrers[2], who deserves his ancient honours, is going to repair the castle of Tamworth, and has flattered me that he will consult me. He has a violent passion for ancestry—and, consequently, I trust will not stake the

LETTER 1912.—[1] They were killed in the palace at Wells (of which Kidder was Bishop) in Nov. 1703.

[2] George William Townshend (1753–1811), sixteenth Baron de Ferrers (a title to which he succeeded on his mother's death), eldest son of fourth Viscount (afterwards first Marquis) Townshend, whom he succeeded in 1807; cr. Earl of Leicester in 1784.

patrimony of the Ferrarii, Townshends, and Comptons at the hazard-table. A little pride would not hurt our nobility, cock and hen. Adieu! dear Sir, send me a good account of yourself. Yours ever,

H. W.

1913. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 3, 1779.

Your Ladyship may be surprised at my dating hence, till you know my reasons. I mended so slowly in town that I hoped change of air would do better; but I moved with as much circumspection as if General Washington was watching me. I took the air four times in Hyde Park, before I began my march, and had this house baked for a week previously, and stayed for the frost. All these precautions have answered, negatively, that is, I have not suffered. I move but from the red to the blue room, and cannot walk even those three yards yet; but my spirits are better, which always flag when the fever is quite gone; so all my vivacity when I was at the worst was a little light-headed. In truth, I was so weary of town, which is a desert, and saw so very few people for the last week, that I could not bear it. I had no books or papers, or dogs or cats to amuse me, so I was swaddled up, and here I am; if I had anything else to say, I would have spared you this preface on myself, Madam.

The year commenced, indeed, with a very significant tempest: I grieve for the cross at Ampthill, but if storms have any meaning, I believe they do not come to give hints to individuals, but to nations. That on the New Year's morning was a very general declaration, and legible from Arlington Street to this place. The road was strewed with tiles, pales, bricks, and trees. I counted seven of the latter

down, two entire garden-walls at Brentford, as Mr. Whitchurch's and Mr. Franks's are here. My skylight was demolished in town, and here I have lost two beautiful elms in a line with this bow-window. Lady Jersey would not grieve more if she had lost two of her pretty fore-teeth. One of the stone Gothic towers at Lady Pomfret's house (now Single-Speech Hamilton's) in my street fell through the roof, and not a thought of it remains. There were only two maids in the house, who luckily lay backwards; but the greatest ruin is at my nephew Dysart's at Ham, where five-and-thirty of the old elms are blown down. I think it no loss, as I hope now one shall see the river from the house. He never would cut a twig to see the most beautiful scene upon earth.

Don't you like the remonstrance of the twelve admirals[1]? and did you expect a rebellion in Wales? The ministers are not lucky in their attempts to raise a revenue; nor, indeed, in raising anything but rebellions. I begin to think we shall revert into a Heptarchy. I was diverted last week with a speech of Lord Townshend: he was coming out of Lord North's levee where he had *extorted* some favour, and met an acquaintance going in. 'Well,' said he, 'what are you going to ask?' The person was shy: 'Come, come,' said the Viscount, 'I am sure you want something: here, I'll lend you my pistols.'

You certainly laugh at me, Madam, when you propose my writing for you to Curtius. I have not his direction here, or would send it to you; but to be sure a letter for him to be left at his printer's would do.

I intend returning to the capital on Tuesday, if I am able to go abroad; or else shall stay here, where I have more comforts, and can divert myself better than waiting for accidental visits; for I make a rule never to ask anybody to

LETTER 1913.—[1] See the following letter.

come to me, which is intercepting them from something they would like better; if I end in my arm-chair, it shall be a punishment to nobody else.

1914. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, Jan. 5, 1779.

Old women, our only remaining prophets, except the opposition and a little common sense, prognosticate great woes for the coming year, from the omens of its first day. A tempest at the instant of the new year made terrible havoc of tiles, chimneys, and trees; and at night great part of Greenwich Hospital was burnt. I doubt casualties will not be the sole completion of the augury. There is actually great apprehension for Jamaica, or, at least, some of the West Indian islands. I believe there are no eggs laid for achievements on our side, but some for discontent. The trial of Admiral Keppel is most unpopular, especially with his own profession. Lord Hawke and eleven other admirals have presented to the King a remonstrance against the precedent, on the lateness of the complaint, on the impropriety of it as subjecting commanders-in-chief to the uncertainty of opinion, and on the precipitation of the Admiralty in ordering the trial. A draft of the remonstrance was shown to Mr. Keppel himself; he tore it, and desired it might not be presented. This did him great honour, but did not prevent the delivery. I should think the Parliament would meet again in cloudy weather, though they may vote it is fair.

I came hither on New Year's Day to try change of weather, as I mend very slowly, or not at all. In truth, I expect but little melioration. My natural weakness, with so many attacks, so much gout in my constitution, and sixty-one—no elastic age, make me conclude that I shall not pass much

of my remaining time out of my own houses. It is a doom I shall not struggle with: I have no idea of forcing a helpless skeleton upon other people, nor can see myself but what I am. It seems strange to me that so many decrepit cardinals should have accepted the tiara, when they were as likely to be buried as crowned.

I shall carry this letter to town with me to-morrow, and add any news, if I hear any before Friday. I might, from the little I had to say, have waited till the Parliament met next week; but it seems as if I had not written to you for some time. Your nephew, I conclude, is out of town, for I have seen him but the once I told you. But I am still more impatient to hear from you again, as your last left you with remains of fever. I know you are not rash, and know how to manage yourself in fevers; but you have not good Dr. Cocchi to watch you, and I have no opinion of Italian Galens. I think, too, that there was low-spirited accent in your style, but trust it was the effect of the times. I impute to that habit an expression, which, though the effusion of your friendship and tenderness for me, I must reclaim against. You say you *love* and *adore* me. Jesus! my dear Sir! What an object of adoration! You put me in mind of what I have read in some traveller, who, viewing some Indian temple that blazed with gold and jewels, was at last introduced into the *sanctum sanctorum*, where behind the veil sat the object of worship—an old baboon! and, perhaps, poor pug's inside, as well as out, was fairer than mine!

8th.

I have no news to add: all eyes are now on Portsmouth, where the trial began yesterday. Prudence is not gone thither, nor had any hand in the business: but she has been out of fashion for some time; and her mimic, Cunning, does not act her part with success. Adieu!

1915. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Arlington Street, Jan. 9, 1779.

Your flight to Bath would have much surprised me, if Mr. Churchill, who, I think, heard it from Stanley, had not prepared me for it. Since you was amused, I am glad you went, especially as you escaped being initiated in Mrs. Miller's follies at Bath-Easton, which you would have mentioned. She would certainly have sent some trapes of a Muse to press you, had she known what good epigrams you write.

I went to Strawberry partly out of prudence, partly from *ennui*. I thought it best to air myself before I go in and out of hot rooms here, and had my house thoroughly warmed for a week previously, and then only stirred from the red room to the blue on the same floor. I stayed five days, and was neither the better nor the worse for it. I was quite tired with having neither company, books, nor amusement of any kind. Either from the emptiness of the town, or that ten weeks of gout have worn out the patience of all my acquaintance, but I do not see three persons in three days. This gives me but an uncomfortable prospect for my latter days: it is but probable that I may be a cripple in a fit or two more, if I have strength to go through them; and as that will be long life, one outlives one's acquaintance. I cannot make new acquaintance, nor interest myself at all about the young, except those that belong to me; nor does that go beyond contributing to their pleasures, without having much satisfaction in their conversation—but—one must take everything as it comes, and make the best of it. I have had a much happier life than I deserve, and than millions that deserve better. I should be very weak if I could not bear the uncomfortableness of old age, when I can afford what comforts it is

capable of. How many poor old people have none of them! I am ashamed whenever I am peevish, and recollect that I have fire and servants to help me.

I hear Admiral Keppel is in high spirits with the great respect and zeal expressed for him. In my own opinion, his constitution will not stand the struggle. I am very uneasy too for the Duke of Richmond, who is at Portsmouth, and will be at least as much agitated.

Sir William Meredith has written a large pamphlet, and a very good one. It is to show, that whenever the Grecian republics taxed their dependents, the latter resisted, and shook off the yoke. He has printed but twelve copies: the Duke of Gloucester sent me one of them. There is an anecdote of my father, on the authority of old Jack White, which I doubt. It says he would not go on with the Excise scheme, though his friends advised it. I cannot speak to the particular event, as I was then at school; but it was more like him to have yielded, against his sentiments, to Mr. Pelham and his candid—or say, plausible and timid friends. I have heard him say that he never did give up his opinion to such men but he always repented it. However, the anecdote in the book would be more to his honour. But what a strange man is Sir William! I suppose, now he has written this book, he will change his opinion, and again be for carrying on the war—or, if he does not know his own mind for two years together, why will he take places, to make everybody doubt his honesty?

1916. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Jan. 14, 1779.

By not hearing from me for a fortnight you may imagine, Madam, that I go out, and have been diverting myself to

repair lost time. Oh, my life is very giddy and dissipated! My exquisite enjoyment has consisted in two returns of pain and lameness; my expeditions, taking the air, with the contrast of new confinement; and my *menus plaisirs*, a few sprinkled visits of charity from a few friends that remained in town. My silence, therefore, has proceeded from suppression of lamentations, and from having nothing to place in their stead.

By Monday I expect company and events; but as I hope you and Lord Ossory will be in the former class, I shall have no occasion to send you the latter. I have heard nothing but what cannot interest your Ladyship or me, that Lady Priscilla Bertie[1] is to marry Mr. Burrell[2], and that an Irish Lady Kingsborough has introduced the fashionable fashion of elopements at Dublin.

There is, in sooth, a charming novelty to-day of a very different kind; an answer[3] from Mr. Gibbon to the monks that have attacked his two famous chapters. It is the quintessence of argument, wit, temper, spirit, and consequently of victory. I did not expect anything so luminous in this age of Egyptian darkness—nor the monks either. Alas! how can he have any of the leaven left?

Did you see Mr. Anstey's verses at Bath-Easton? They were truly more a production of this century; and not at all too good for a schoolboy. In the printed copy they have omitted an indecent stanza or two on Mrs. Macaulay. In truth, Dame Thucydides has made but an uncouth match[4]; but Anstey has tumbled from a greater height than she.

LETTER 1916.—[1] Daughter of the Duke of Ancaster.

[2] Peter (1754–1820), eldest son of Peter Burrell, of Beckenham, Kent; succeeded his uncle as second Baronet, 1787; cr. (June 16, 1796) Baron Gwydyr, of Gwydyr, Carnarvonshire.

[3] The *Vindication* of his *History of the Decline and Fall* from the attacks of Davis and Chelsum.

[4] Mrs. Macaulay married in Dec. 1778 (as her second husband) William Graham, brother of James Graham, the quack doctor.

Sense may be led astray by the senses; but how could a man write the *Bath Guide*, and then nothing but doggerel and stupidity?

Mr. Crawfurd has come in as I was writing; he tells me everything goes *swimmingly* for Admiral Keppel, which he is very glad of; but he is very sorry for Palliser. I cannot be so equitable, if it is unjust to rejoice that a scoundrel is odious; besides, it will give a hint that it is not absolutely safe to be so.

1917. To the Rev. William Cole.

Jan. 15, 1779.

I send you by Dr. Jacob, as you desired, my Life of Mr. Baker, and with it your own materials. I beg you will communicate my MS. to nobody—but if you think it worth your trouble, I will consent to your transcribing it—but on one condition, and a silly one for me to exact, who am as old as you, and broken to pieces, and very unlikely to survive you; but, should so improbable a thing happen, I must exact that you will keep your transcript sealed up, with orders written on the cover, to be restored to me in case of an accident: for I should certainly dislike very much to see it printed without my consent. I should not think of your copying it, if you did not love so much to *transcribe*, and sometimes things of as little value as my MS. I shall beg to have it returned to me by a safe hand as soon as you can, for I have nothing but the foul copy which nobody can read, I believe, but I and my secretary.

I am actually printing my justification about Chatterton, but only two hundred copies to give away, for I hate calling in the whole town to a fray, of which otherwise probably not one thousand persons would ever hear. You shall have a copy as soon as ever it is finished, which my printer says

will be in three weeks. You know my printer is my secretary too: do not imagine I am giving myself airs of a numerous household of officers.

I shall be glad to see the letter of Mr. Baker you mention. You will perceive two or three notes in my MS. in a different hand from mine, or that of my *amanuensis* (still the same *officer*): they were added by a person I lent it to, and I have effaced part of the last.

I must finish lest Dr. Jacob should call, and my parcel not be ready. I hope your sore throat is gone; my gout has returned again a little with taking the air only, but did not stay—however, I am still confined, and almost ready to remain so, to prevent disappointment. Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

1918. To the Rev. William Cole.

Arlington Street, Jan. 28, 1779.

I write in as much hurry as you did, dear Sir, and thank you for the motive of yours: mine is to prevent your fatiguing yourself in copying my MS., for which I am not in the least haste; pray keep it till another safe conveyance presents itself. You may bring the gout, that is, I am sorry to hear, flying about you, into your hand by wearying it.

How can you tell me I may well be cautious about my MS. and yet advise me to print it?—no, I shall not provoke nests of hornets, till I am dust, as they will be too.

If I dictated tales when ill in my bed, I must have been worse than I thought; for, as I know nothing of it, I must have been light-headed. Mr. Lort was certainly misinformed; though he seems to have told you the story kindly to the honour of my philosophy, or spirits—but I had rather have

no fame than what I do not deserve. I am fretful or low-spirited at times in the gout, like other weak old men, and have less to boast than most men. I have some strange things in my drawer, even wilder than the *Castle of Otranto*, and called *Hieroglyphic Tales*[1]—but they were not written lately, nor in the gout, nor, whatever they may seem, written when I was out of my senses. I showed one or two of them to a person since my recovery, who may have mentioned them, and occasioned Mr. Lort's misintelligence. I did not at all perceive that the latter looked ill; and hope he is quite recovered. You shall see Chatterton soon. Adieu!

1919. To Sir Horace Mann.

Jan. 29, 1779.

Suspense still! The court-martial continues, and everything respectfully awaits its determination: even France and America seem to lie upon their oars till the oracle at Portsmouth has pronounced. The response, however, is not likely to be ambiguous. There has been such juggling to warp the judgement of the priests of Neptune; and the frauds have been so openly detected, and salt-water Flamens are so boisterous when they can see through an imposition; that Palliser and his accomplices, high and low, will probably rue the tempest they have brewed. I hinted in my last that there is a man[1], whom you once knew well, that prefers cunning to prudence: he will not exult in the choice he has made. The Duke of Marlborough and Lord Pembroke declare against the First Lord of the Admiralty; the second is expected to be less out [of] humour with the court-martial than with being denied the Mastership of

Letter 1918.—[1] Printed in the fourth volume of Horace Walpole's *Works*.

Letter 1919.—[1] Lord Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty. *Walpole*.

the Horse; but, when a tide turns, it sweeps many along with it. I will say no more of politics; the horizon does not clear—but I have no events to tell you. I write only to amuse your impatience.

Garrick is dead; not a public loss, for he had quitted the stage. He is to be buried on Monday in great ceremony at Westminster Abbey; but, not having been so inattentive to worldly riches as Lord Chatham, his family will not be provided for by Parliament. They had both great merit in their different walks, and were both good actors; but we are Athenians enough to be full as fond of the stage as of the state. Both, at present, are a little in want of a genius.

There is a report that the poor simple Lord Maynard[2] has shot himself at Naples—is it true? The Duke of Dorset[3] is almost in as bad a scrape as if *he* had married Lady Maynard. He is waiting for a Duchess till Lady Derby[4] is divorced. He would not marry her before Lord Derby did, and now is forced to take her, when he himself has made her a very bad match. A quarter of our peeresses will have been wives of half our living peers.

You must be content with these brief letters, while I write for your satisfaction rather than for your information. I am recovered enough to go to a few places; but I do not, nor can expect to mend so fast as when younger.

1920. To Edward Gibbon.

[1779.]

The penetration, solidity, and taste, that made you the first of historians, dear Sir, prevent my being surprised

[2] He had married the well-known Nancy Parsons, who had been kept by the Dukes of Grafton, Dorset, &c., but it was not true that he had killed himself. *Walpole.*

[3] John Frederick Sackville, third Duke of Dorset.

[4] Lady Elizabeth Hamilton. The divorce did not take place. *Walpole.*

Letter 1920.—Wrongly placed by

at your being the best writer of controversial pamphlets too[1]. I have read you with more precipitation than such a work deserved, but I could not disobey you and detain it. Yet even in that hurry I could discern, besides a thousand beauties and strokes of wit, the inimitable eighty-third page, and the conscious dignity that you maintain throughout over your monkish antagonists. When you are so superior in argument, it would look like insensibility to the power of your reasoning, to select transient passages for commendation; and yet I must mention one that pleased me particularly, from the delicacy of the severity, and from its novelty too; it is, 'Bold is not the word.' This is the feathered arrow of Cupid, that is more formidable than the club of Hercules. I need not specify thanks, when I prove how much I have been pleased.

Your most obliged.

1921. To Earl Harcourt.

My dear Lord, Feb. 1, 1779.

Mrs. Damer has consulted me on a case of heraldic conscience, on which I am not competent: you must forgive me for troubling your Lordship, for whither can I recur but to an oracle? She has been told that she has no right to use crest and motto, is that so? Ought not she, too, as an only child, to bear her arms in an escutcheon of pretence?

I was at the Vesey-chaos last night, and wish Lady Harcourt and your Lordship had been behind a cloud. I must do Mrs. Montagu the justice to say that I never heard more warm encomiums on both, and the Irish bore equal testimonies.

C. between letters of March and April 1779.

[1] A reference to Gibbon's *Vindication*, which appeared early in January 1779.

I hope you are all perfectly easy about Mrs. Harcourt, of whom I heard a very good account yesterday.

Your Lordship's most dutiful,

H. Walpole.

1922. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Feb. 1, 1779.

When Lord Ossory is in town, Madam, I do not presume to think of writing. He is more in the world, and hears everything sooner than I do; nor would it be fair to him, to divide a moment of your time with him. However, there were such interesting topics in the letter I had the honour of receiving this evening, that I must answer it directly. But I shall waive the first subject, which concerns myself, to come to the last, that touches your Ladyship; and can I but admire your goodness in thinking of me, when an angel is inoculated? You must now continue it, for you have promised I shall hear how she goes on. Sweet little love! you must be anxious, though inoculation now can scarce be called a hazard. It is as sure as a cheat of winning, though a strange run of luck may once in two thousand times disappoint him.

The pictures at Houghton, I hear, and I fear, are sold: what can I say? I do not like even to think on it. It is the most signal mortification to my idolatry for my father's memory, that it could receive. It is stripping the temple of his glory and of his affection. A madman excited by rascals has burnt his Ephesus. I must never cast a thought towards Norfolk more; nor will hear my nephew's name if I can avoid it. Him I can only pity; though it is strange he should recover any degree of sense, and never any of feeling! I could have saved my family, but cannot repent the motives that bound my hands. If

any unhappy lunatic is ever the better for my conduct and example, it is preferable to a collection of pictures.

Yes, Madam, I do think the pomp of Garrick's funeral perfectly ridiculous. It is confounding the immense space between pleasing talents and national services. What distinctions remain for a patriot hero, when the most solemn have been showered on a player?—but when a great empire is on its decline, one symptom is, there being more eagerness on trifles than on essential objects. Shakespeare, who *wrote* when Burleigh counselled and Nottingham[1] fought, was not rewarded and honoured like Garrick who only *acted*, when—indeed I do not know who has counselled and who has fought.

I do not at all mean to detract from Garrick's merit, who was a real genius in his way, and who, I believe, was never equalled in both tragedy and comedy. Still I cannot think that acting, however perfectly, what others have written, is one of the most astonishing talents: yet I will own as fairly that Mrs. Porter and Mademoiselle Dumenil have struck me so much, as even to reverence them. Garrick never affected me quite so much as those two actresses, and some few others in particular parts, as Quin, in Falstaff; King[2], in Lord Ogleby; Mrs. Pritchard, in Maria, in the *Nonjuror*; Mrs. Clive, in Mrs. Cadwallader; and Mrs. Abington, in Lady Teazle. They all seemed the very persons: I suppose that in Garrick I thought I saw more of his art; yet his Lear, Richard, Hotspur (which the town had not taste enough to like), Kitely, and Ranger, were as capital and perfect as action could be. In declamation, I confess, he never charmed me; nor could he be a gentleman; his Lord Townley and Lord Hastings were mean, but

LETTER 1922.—[1] Charles Howard, first Earl of Nottingham, who, as Lord Howard of Effingham, was in command at the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

[2] Thomas King (1730–1805).

then too the parts are indifferent, and do not call for a master's exertion.

I should shock Garrick's *devotees* if I uttered all my opinion: I will trust your Ladyship with it—it is, that Le Texier is twenty times the genius. What comparison between the powers that do the fullest justice to a single part, and those that instantaneously can fill a whole piece, and transform themselves with equal perfection into men and women, and pass from laughter to tears, and make you shed the latter at both? Garrick, when he made one laugh, was not always judicious, though excellent. What idea did his Sir John Brute give of a surly husband? His Bayes was no less entertaining; but it was a garreteer-bard. Old Cibber preserved the solemn coxcomb; and was the caricature of a great poet, as the part was designed to be.

Half I have said I know is heresy, but fashion had gone to excess, though very rarely with so much reason. Applause had turned his head, and yet he was never content even with that prodigality. His jealousy and envy were unbounded; he hated Mrs. Clive, till she quitted the stage, and then cried her up to the skies, to depress Mrs. Abington. He did not love Mrs. Pritchard, and with more reason, for there was more spirit and originality in her Beatrice than in his Benedick.

But if the town did not admire his acting more than it deserved, which indeed in general it was difficult to do, what do you think, Madam, of its prejudice, even for his writings? What stuff was his Jubilee Ode, and how paltry his prologues and epilogues! I have always thought that he was just the counterpart of Shakespeare; this, the first of writers, and an indifferent actor; that, the first of actors, and a woful author. Posterity would believe me, who will see only his writings; and who will see those of another modern idol, far less deservedly enshrined, Dr. Johnson.

I have been saying this morning, that the latter deals so much in triple tautology, or the fault of repeating the same sense in three different phrases, that I believe it would be possible, taking the ground-work for all three, to make one of his *Ramblers* into three different papers, that should all have exactly the same purport and meaning, but in different phrases. It would be a good trick for somebody to produce one and read it; a second would say, 'Bless me, I have this very paper in my pocket, but in quite other diction'; and so a third.

Our Lord has been so good as to call on me again, and found me; but I take for granted will make his little Gertrude a visit to-morrow, though probably not bring your Ladyship with him till she is recovered. I am in no pain, even for her beauty.

As the court martial is likely to end this week, I suppose the Parliamentary campaign will be warmly renewed the next; but what campaign will restore this country to its greatness? It is blotted out of the list of mighty empires; and they who love processions may make a splendid funeral for it!—but, indeed, it was buried last year, with Lord Chatham, at whose interment there were not half the noble coaches that attended Garrick's!

Feb. 9, 1779.

I am thoroughly concerned, Madam, for yours and Lord Ossory's disappointment, and very sorry you trusted to a surgeon in the country, as they must have less experience. However, if a second trial should fail, you may be very easy, for I believe there is scarce an instance of the small-pox naturally, after two inoculations. The late Lady Lothian, who was in that case, I know never had it. For your perfect tranquillity, I still wish it may appear; she will certainly have very few, with so little disposition to infection.

You are both so very partial to me, Madam, that I dare not gulp your commendation of the pamphlet[3]. I wrote it just to say I had cleared myself, and have given very few away, and had rather it was soon forgotten, as it is likely to be in such distracted times. I sincerely do not recollect why I did not return the first papers; I have spoken strict truth to the best of my memory, and cannot tell whether I forgot or reserved them to transcribe.

You blame my humility, and therefore I will not give the answer you expect; especially as I have others ready. In the first place, I have not impartiality enough for such a work as Mr. Elmsley[4] thinks me fit for. In the next, it would be an imitation, and there even my humility fails me; and the last and strongest plea is, that I am twenty years too old to write what if well written would demand twenty years to write, allowing the necessary time for collecting materials; but I have already scribbled a vast deal too much. I must publish my fourth volume of *Painters*, and then intend the world shall hear my name no more.

The weather has been disagreeably too hot, but I cannot say has affected me *en bien ou en mal.* I certainly recover more slowly than ever, as is natural; and therefore conclude reasonably that one more severe fit will totally confine me. I go nowhere but into very private rooms, nor think of others; and now dispense with my saying any more of myself, Madam. You forbid me humility, and yet all I say and do is founded on the consciousness of my own weakness, and on the dread of being blind to my own defects.

We are in greater confusion than all the world knows. Last night came an account of a serious insurrection at

[3] Horace Walpole's *Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton.*

[4] Probably Peter Elmsley (1736–1802), a bookseller.

Edinburgh, where the mob has burnt two mass-houses, and threatened some lives. The state of Ireland is still more alarming: Lord Buckingham[5] is coming away. There are rumours of changes, and certainly overtures for them. It is declared that Lord Suffolk[6] desires to retire. We may have novelties; but whence is there any hope?

I give your Ladyship my word that I know of no offers that my nieces have refused or even received. Lies are so rampant that they may have been involved in the havoc. One would think there were sad subjects enough of all sorts to glut the maw of ill-nature, but like Crawfurd, it had rather dine where it is not asked than where invited. Your Ladyship's words imply no malicious account in what you have been told; but falsehood is predominant, and not a hundredth part of what one hears every day is true.

I long to hear that you are at ease about Lady Gertrude; and then I will indulge the hope of seeing you. In the meantime pray permit me in my turn to tax your Ladyship's humility. Pray read all Mr. Gibbon's pamphlet, and do not fear not understanding it. It is luminous as day, and clearness one of his brightest talents. I am sure the whole will delight you. It is Mr. Gibbon that *can make the driest subject interesting and entertaining*, and his reply to Davies is the strongest evidence that can be given.

1923. To the Rev. William Cole.

Feb. 4, 1779.

I have received the MS., and though you forbid my naming the subject more, I love truth, and truth in a friend so much, that I must tell you, that so far from taking your sincerity ill, I had much rather you should act with your

[5] The Earl of Buckinghamshire, Viceroy of Ireland.

[6] Secretary of State for the Northern Province.

native honest sincerity than say you was pleased with my MS. I have always tried, as much as is in human nature, to divest myself of the self-love of an author; in the present case I had less difficulty than ever: for I never thought my Life of Mr. Baker one of my least indifferent works. You might, believe me, have sent me your long letter, whatever it contained: it would not have made a momentary cloud between us. I have not only friendship, but great gratitude for you, for a thousand instances of kindness—and should detest any writing of mine that made a breach with a friend, and still more if it could make me forget obligations.

I am,

Yours most cordially,

HOR. WALPOLE.

1924. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Feb. 11, 1779.

I AM only getting ready this letter for to-morrow, when it is to set out with the full triumph of Admiral Keppel, which is expected in town to-night from Portsmouth. The fronts of several houses are already decorated with lamps, and, as soon as the courier arrives, I suppose the whole town will be in a blaze—I hope, only of light; but, when a mob expresses its joy, one may always fear lest it should mistake mischief for merriment. The guards are ordered to be doubled: I fancy a few of them will not be far from the Admiralty[1].

The good people of Edinburgh have set but an ugly example. There has been a serious insurrection against the Papists, and two mass-houses were burnt; and the Provost quieted the tumult only by promising that the toleration of

LETTER 1924. — [1] Lord Sandwich, Keppel's enemy, was First Lord of the Admiralty. *Walpole.*

Popery should not be extended to Scotland. This will be agreeable news to the Americans, who did not expect to see the administration reproved by Scots.

You will not be agitated by popular rumours. If I repeat them to you, it is, that if anything should happen, you may not be surprised. In a word, some changes at least are expected, particularly in the Admiralty, the rudder of which, it is said, has been offered to Lord Howe,—some say, and refused by him; others, that he objected to Lord George Germaine; and others, that he demands an inquiry on himself and his brother. Lord Suffolk is certainly to retire on the plea of infirmity, which is a reason why he should not have come into place; and Lord Buckingham is to quit Ireland, and, I believe, is allowed to say, at his own request too—he also might have had an earlier plea: in short, difficulties at present are more plentiful than resources. *Per contra*, Spain is said to have offered us her mediation, and to have it accepted. Yesterday I heard that the Duke of Medina Sidonia had actually set out for Paris on that errand, but was dead on the road. The want of a successor will not be an impediment, if there is no other.

This minute I receive your tender letter of the 16th of last month: but pray, my dear Sir, be easy about me; I am as much recovered as probably I shall be. I go out, and walk tolerably with a cane. To be sure, another severe fit may confine me at home; but, as I do not indulge distant hopes, why should I disturb myself with future fears? I have patience and submission, and they are at least as potent as cares. Of everything I make the best I can. Immediate vexations one cannot easily divert; but gloomy thoughts that are resident, and return only when the mind is vacant, I remove by any amusement that offers. This is my case about my nephew and Houghton. I forget them as fast as possible, though I own they frequently return.

It is very true, I did desire the pictures should be sold, as I preferred his paying his grandfather's and father's debts to false splendour; but that is not the case now. As he is not legally obliged, he does not think of acquitting his father's debts; and, as he has compounded his grandfather's unsatisfied debts for fifteen thousand pounds, he does not want forty thousand. In short, I am persuaded that the villainous crew about him, knowing they could not make away clandestinely with the collection in case of his death, prefer money which they can easily appropriate to themselves. Whether the price affixed is adequate, or too low, is difficult to say. Imaginary value depends on circumstances and times. I once should have thought forty thousand pounds a high price: the whole collection made by my father, of which there have already been three sales, cost but that sum. Five years ago, with the opulence and rage for *virtù*, they would have produced more. At present, not so much. Last night I heard the bargain is not concluded. Cipriani[2] was desired to value them, and has called in West. To be sure, I should wish they were rather sold to the crown of England than to that of Russia, where they will be burnt in a wooden palace on the first insurrection: here they would be still Sir Robert Walpole's collection. But my grief is that they are not to remain at Houghton, where he placed them, and wished them to remain. Pride and piety leave me but that desire.

At midnight.

I am this moment come in, and may as well write to you as go to bed; for it is impossible to sleep, from the noise of squibs and crackers. The sentence[3] arrived at

[2] Giovanni Battista Cipriani (1727–1785).

[3] 'The court, on Feb. 11, pronounced that the charge was "malicious and ill-founded"; that Keppel had behaved as became "a judicious, brave, and experienced officer"; and thereupon unanimously and honourably acquitted him.' (*D. N. B.*)

half an hour after nine, and in two hours the whole town was illuminated. I drove with two ladies from Grosvenor Square to Spring Garden, to wish old Lady Albemarle[4] joy. She had just been blooded, for she is seventy-five, but you may imagine was in happy spirits; for the sentence is as honourable as possible, and terms the accusation unfounded and malicious in every article. Palliser escaped from Portsmouth this morning at five, and arrived in a hired post-chaise at the Admiralty; but was known as he entered, and was pulled by the populace by the coat, but got in safe. We passed twice by his house in Pall Mall just now, and found a mob before it, but a strong guard of soldiers and constables. The people have not been riotous yet: but as they are flinging squibs, and the streets are full, there will be accidents if no determined mischief. I hope to-morrow morning to hear that the night has passed quietly, which will be to the honour of the opposition. The opposition in my father's time were not of so harmless a complexion; but as he was guiltless, which is known and allowed now, malevolence could only keep up a spirit against him by clamour. But, good night! I will reserve the rest of my paper for to-morrow.

Friday morn, 12th.

My servants, who have been out this morning, tell me that about three o'clock the mob forced their way into Palliser's house, in spite of the guards, and demolished everything in it; and that they broke the windows of Lord George Germaine and of Lord North, and that several of the rioters are taken up. How wise in an unsuccessful administration to have commenced accusation!

You talk of skating on the Arno—it is hot enough here

[4] Lady Anne Lenox, youngest daughter of Charles Lenox, first Duke of Richmond, widow of William Anne, second Earl of Albemarle, mother of George, third Earl, and of Admiral Augustus Keppel. *Walpole.*

to bathe in the Thames. I was literally forced to throw off the quilt of my bed the night before last—the women are afraid of an earthquake. I will write again soon, for I think there will be matter.

P.S. The mob entirely gutted Sir Hugh Palliser's house, but the furniture had been removed.

1925. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Bedfordshire[1], Feb. 17, 1779.

I accept Lady Gertrude's single pustule, Madam, in full of all accounts: it is an ambassador that completely represents its principal, and is authorized to sign *peace* in its name. I could almost imagine that you had sent me the pimple itself, *for* I found a rosebud and two cowslips in your letter, which would be a prettier transformation than any in Ovid.

I am not fond of mobs, Madam, though I like the occasion, and can but compare the feel I had from them, with what I should suffer were the illuminations for the conquest of America. After putting out those lights we should have heard,—

And then put out *the* light.

Liberty has still a continent to exist in: I do not care a straw who is minister in this abandoned country. It is the *good old cause of freedom* that I have at heart; and the vexation and mortification that I have seen for these last days, tell me what we have escaped, if I did not know it before.

We had a most brilliant Westminster last night, and guns and squibs till six in the morning; but the City, I hear, was not illuminated. Lady Greenwich, looking uglier than ever with rage, said she would go out of town,

Letter 1925.—[1] Walpole was probably writing in bed. See also letter 1928.

since she could not be safe in her own house. I replied, 'Madam, I believe your Ladyship must not go to Edinburgh to be quiet, for the tumults there are a little more serious than ours.' In truth, I, who was born in an age of mobs, never saw any like those of this week; they were, as George Montagu said of our earthquakes, *so tame you might have stroked them.* I drove through the whole City beyond the Royal Exchange on Friday night with my nieces, to show them the illuminations, and back through Holborn and St. James's Square, where was the greatest concourse, and passed as quietly as at noonday. I own I was diverted to see fear surmount pride. The Duke of Northumberland, who, on the eve of accepting his place[2], would have drenched the populace with beer and ale, would not put out lights till midnight, and then was forced to hang out flambeaux; and so was Lord Weymouth, who has been in a charming panic, for he has no spirit even when he is drunk. It is pleasant to see those who condemned the towns of America to fire and sword terrified with crackers.

I found Admiral Keppel at the Duchess of Richmond's this morning: he looks ill, and quite exhausted with fatigue. He has not been at court, or the House of Commons yet, and will go out of town as soon as he can: for my part I shall not light another candle till Lady Gertrude arrives in full beauty.

1926. To the Rev. William Cole.

Feb. 18, 1779.

I sent you my Chattertoniad last week, in hopes it would sweeten your pouting, but I find it has not; or has miscarried, for you have not acknowledged the receipt with your usual punctuality.

[2] As Master of the Horse.

Have you seen Hasted's[1] new *History of Kent*? I am sailing through it, but am stopped every minute by careless mistakes. They tell me the author has good materials, but is very negligent; and so I perceive. He has not even given a list of monuments in the churches, which I do not remember omitted in any history of a county—but he is rich in pedigrees; though I suppose they have many errors too, as I have found some in those I am acquainted with. It is unpardonable to be inaccurate in a work in which one nor expects nor demands anything but fidelity.

We have a great herald arising in a very noble race, Lord de Ferrars. I hope to make him a Gothic architect too: for he is going to repair Tamworth Castle, and flatters me that I shall give him sweet counsel. I enjoin him to *kernellare*. Adieu!

Yours ever,
H. W.

1927. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, Feb. 18, 1779.

I PROMISED you a sequel to my history of illuminations, and here it is. They were repeated on Friday night, the 12th; and were more universal than on the preceding evening, but without the least disorder or riot. The day before yesterday the Admiral himself arrived, as privately as he could; but at night all Westminster was again lighted up and part of the City, and guns and crackers were fired till morning, and yet no mischief done. The two Houses have voted compliments to him, and the City its freedom. Palliser has resigned his seat at the Admiralty, and vacated that in Parliament, for fear of being expelled. He has demanded a trial; but the Admiralty is accused of being

LETTER 1926.—[1] Edward Hasted (1732–1812). His *History* was published in four folio volumes between 1778 and 1799.

less eager to order it than they were that of Keppel. The latter had not been at court yesterday, nor in the House; but there have been motions in both Houses leading to the attack on Lord Sandwich. It is not known whether he will be removed or not. The town believes there have been negotiations with the opposition, but that the terms offered were not satisfactory. I assert so little, that I shall certainly draw you into no rash credulity. Were you here, you might believe twenty false reports every hour. It is not always the case of persons at a distance to be the best informed; but you have a very cautious historian.

I often meet at Gloucester House a Baron Rutherford, who is penetrated with friendship and gratitude for you: there is no esteem he does not express for you.

I shall reserve the rest of my paper till to-morrow; for, though I send you nothing but facts, every day may produce some event at present. The times have a bag of eggs like a pullet.

19th.

The Admiral was at the House yesterday, when the Speaker[1] harangued him in a fine oration, they say; to which he made a very modest and pathetic answer. To-morrow he is to be congratulated and banqueted by the City, on which, I hear, we are to be again illuminated; but I am tired of crackers, and shall go quietly to Strawberry. There was to be a motion in the Commons to-day for addressing the King to remove Palliser from his other posts of General of the Marines and Governor of Scarborough; but I shall not know the result before the post is gone out, and must refer you to the newspapers.

The French will not like the *éclaircissement* of the court martial, by which it is clear they were beaten and fled. The City, which does not haggle, has expressed this a little

LETTER 1927.—[1] Sir Fletcher Norton.

grossly in their address to Keppel. I do not love exultation. There is no grace but in silent victory. Our insults to the Americans at the outset of the war were not in the character of this country; and double the shame on those who have certainly not been victorious over them! The authors of the war have made a woful figure from the beginning to this day!

P.S. Remember, that when you do not hear frequently, you may be sure I have nothing particular to tell you. All eggs are not hatched that are even laid.

1928. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Bedfordshire, Feb. 23, 1779.

As you bid me write again before your arrival, and do not name the day, I hurry to obey you, Madam, though I have nothing to tell you, but how happy I shall be to see you. Were I a good courtier, to be sure I should announce *the great news*, as called, of the capture of Santa Lucia[1]. I did say there was great want of good news when this conquest was so dignified! I think the last King of Great Britain should thence be called Lucius, as the first Christian King of it was. *My humility* does not stoop to exultation on such pigmy victories; but it does find matter of triumph on seeing that when your Ladyship pretends to vanity, you are still forced to borrow your proofs from humility: for is not it being lowly in mind to be proud of agreeing in opinion with others, and not depending on your own taste? Your Ladyship's example will sooner confirm me than your arguments cure me; nay, I beg you will leave me one virtue, lest I should not be

Letter 1928.—[1] Santa Lucia capitulated to the English under General Grant in Dec. 1778.

worth one. I have at the same time a supreme reverence for pride; for that honest pride that makes one respect oneself, and prevents one's wading through every kennel to keep one's place. Oh that it should be possible to be insolent on the strength of majorities, and when the tide turns, to crouch to those one has insulted, and beseech them to accept of treachery to one's friends as an atonement! Humble or not, I would burst with pride rather than so debase myself.

The winter has, indeed, Madam, been worthy of last summer. On the contrary, Sir Horace Mann tells me they have skating on the Arno[2]. I went to Strawberry on Saturday to enjoy the sun, and to avoid the squibs and crackers. There was a great deal of glass shed at night, and they say the illuminations are to be repeated on Thursday, when the Admiral is to dine with the West India merchants.

The rejoicings have produced exceeding ill-humour, which being very productive of the same temper in its adversaries, I think the nation will awake a little from its slumbers. Whenever the thorough *reveil* does come, it will be very serious!

Poor Mrs. Brand is dead of a sore throat; Lady Priscilla Bertie is married to-day, and the Queen has produced another Prince[3].

Pray make my Io Pæans to Lady Gertrude upon her recovery from renoculation; and tell Lady Anne that—

> C cannot claim Castalia's choicest lay,
> As Ann and Ampthill ask it all for A.

P.S. Mr. Beauclerk has just called, and told me a shocking history. Sir Hugh Palliser has a sister at York, whom

[2] Hitherto printed Anio. See letter to Mann of Feb. 11, 1779.
[3] Prince Octavius; d. 1783.

he supported. As if the poor woman was not wretched enough with his disgrace and ruin, or accessory to his guilt, the mob there has demolished her house, and she is gone mad. What a bill would the authors of the American war have to pay, if they were charged as they deserve with all the calamities it has given date to! however, I do believe they are as sorry as if they were penitent!

1929. To Sir Horace Mann.

Feb. 25, 1779.

Your veritable nephew brought me, yesterday, your letter of the 6th, which came by the courier, and he has just sent me a message that your servant is to set out on his return at three o'clock, and it is now noon, and I am expecting a person on business, so that I shall have but a minute to write.

My last letters have hinted at the disgraces Lord Sandwich's artifices have brought on the court by the absurd persecution of Admiral Keppel. It was very near overturning the administration; and the Chancellor[1], Lord Weymouth, and the Paymaster[2] (a little faction of themselves) would have tumbled the rest down, could they have offered enough to content the opposition. I think the present system will hold together something longer, though their credit is much shaken. The opposition is not very able, the session is far advanced, and a little success has arrived to prop them. St. Lucia is taken, secures St. Vincent's, and if Byron joins that expedition unhurt by D'Estaing, the West Indies will be saved. These are 'Ifs'; but yet more than the ministers have had for some time. The other expedition to Georgia has prospered too, but is too small, and with the winter to struggle through, to be of much

Letter 1929.—[1] Lord Thurlow. [2] Mr. Rigby. *Walpole.*

consequence: and you see we have not as yet sent a man to America of late, nor can get a thousand. In short, what I would not mention but by your own courier, nothing can be more deplorable than our prospect. It was but yesterday Lord North could tell the House he had got the money on the loan, and is happy to get it under eight per cent. Then the new taxes are to come, and new discontent; though ill-humour certainly rises very little in proportion to the distresses; yet even that has a bad cause—the indifference and dissipation of the whole country. I doubt it must be some great blow that will rouse us. I doubt whether the French will think of Minorca. Our greatest felicity is that they seem to have *thought* as little as we. Is it credible that they should have attempted nothing? The war hitherto has been a war of privateering, in which France has suffered most. In one word, the backwardness of Spain has saved us. Their junction with France had given the finishing blow.

This is but a sketch, and as much as I have time to tell you. I do not say so much, nor anything to your nephew that might give him an impression that might recoil on you. Indeed, I do but look on, and lament the fall of England. I think the opposition composed of honester but not of abler men than the administration. Easy I am so far, that the ill-success of the American war has saved us from slavery—in truth, I am content that liberty will exist anywhere, and amongst Englishmen, even 'cross the Atlantic. The Scots, who planned our chains, have, as formerly, given the court some heartaches, and would be the first to give more if the tide should turn. I think the King will support Sandwich still; though the load on him is heavy. Admiral Keppel has behaved with much decency, and more temper than could be expected. There was more riot on Saturday, when he dined in the City, and much fracture of windows; but it

is generally believed that the court hired the mob, to make the other side sick of rejoicing. The Admiral has declined another dinner, with the West India merchants, to prevent more tumult; and, now St. Lucia is taken, I believe they are glad to be rid of him.

This is enough for a comment on my late letters. You know, I never shift my principles with times. The times, alas! have shifted their principles; but I am interrupted, and must seal my letter, lest it be too late.

1930. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, March 9, 1779.

There has been a moment in which the scales have been more equally balanced than for some years; but the fluctuation has not lasted a week. On Wednesday, the opposition in the House of Commons mounted to 170, and the majority sunk to 34. Yesterday, though the former mustered four more votes, the administration rejected the motion by a majority of 72. The questions both days related to the fleet. Yesterday Admiral Keppel and Lord Howe declared they could not serve under the present ministers; yet I think the latter will stand their ground, even to Lord Sandwich, though the general opinion is that he will have the seals, which Lord Suffolk's death has vacated. He died at the Bath on Saturday, whither he was but just arrived in a desperate state. His death is no blow but to his family. Seldom was he able to do any business; and had no talents when he could.

While I am writing to you I am wishing for some member of the House of Commons to come in, to give me an account of your nephew: for one of the morning papers says he spoke yesterday for the court; and, though I am persuaded well, I want to be told so; and, as I dine abroad, I am at

least as eager to be able to tell you so, and am afraid of not knowing it in time. I did write to you by your courier, but believe he did not set out by some days so soon as I expected; however, he must arrive before this.

We have, undoubtedly, made a great number of French prizes; and D'Estaing, in particular, has made a woful figure. They say at Paris, that, if ever he is Marshal of France, 'au moins son bâton ne sera pas du bois de Sainte-Lucie[1].' There do not seem to spring many heroes out of this war on either side. Fame has shut her temple, too, in Germany: yet I think that both the Emperor and King of Prussia have some claim on history; the latter by clipping Cæsar's soaring wings, and Cæsar by having kept so old and so able a professor at bay for a whole campaign. Still, the professor has carried a great point by having linked his interests with those of the Empire. The gratitude of those princes might soon wear out; but it is their interest to maintain a great, though new, power, that can balance the house of Austria.

We have no private news of any sort. As, by your desire, I write more frequently than formerly, you must be content with shorter letters; for distance and absence deprive us of the little incidents of common correspondence. I am forced to write to you of such events only as one would write to posterity. One cannot say, 'I dined with such a person yesterday,' when the letter is to be a fortnight on the road; still less, when you know nothing of my Lord or Mr. Such-an-one, whom I should mention.

I hear very wild accounts of my nephew. His chief occupation is his militia: he plagues them so much, that they are half as mad as himself. The reports about the sale of his pictures are uncertain too. I know he himself

LETTER 1930.—[1] A kind of wood peculiar to that island, which had fallen into the hands of the English.

holds different language at different times and to different persons. Well! he has long prepared me for the worst! So it will not be unexpected if it comes!

Your nephew desired me to give him a list of pamphlets for you; I told him, as is true, that there is scarcely any such thing. The pamphleteers now vent themselves in quotidian letters in the newspapers. Formerly, you know, there were only weekly essays in a *Fog's Journal* or *Craftsman*: at present, every morning paper has one page of political invective at least, and so coarse, that they would be as sour as vinegar before they reached Florence: you would *cross* yourself at reading them.

I asked you about a report of Lord Maynard's sudden death. We know it was false, and that his wife, who has always some fascinating powder, has established herself at the court of Naples by dispensing James's. They say she is universally visited, except by those English prudes, the Countesses of Berkeley and Orford. I should not wonder if the former was to dethrone Lady Maynard by distributing Keysar's pills[2].

P.S. I kept my letter open to the last minute, and am now vexed to tell you that the *Public Advertiser* misled me. Your nephew did speak yesterday, and very well; but not for the administration. It surprises me much; for the last time I saw him, not a fortnight ago, his language was very different, as it was before Christmas; and I told you how much I encouraged him in those sentiments on your account; not that I think any man could be so unjust as to impute his deviations to you, who would be the last man upon earth to instil opposition into him. I hope he has no such intention, and that this sally will have no suite. It would be impossible for me, and so out of character that it would

[2] For the cure of a disgusting disease. *Walpole.*

have no weight, to argue with him, when I have ever so totally condemned the American war, which has undone us; but I shall entreat him not to frequent the House, and to return to you, rather than act a part that would be so unpleasing to you. I think if, in your gentle way, you lamented yourself to him, his congenial nature would be more struck than even if he had not acted contrary to your wishes. I have not time to say a word more—but do not torment yourself. Trust to your own merit; and, if your modesty is too great for that, call in philosophy, that is a real comforter, when coupled with the consciousness of having done our duty.

1931. To Lord Hailes.

Arlington Street, March 12, 1779.

I have received this moment from your bookseller, Sir, the valuable present of the second volume of your *Annals*, and beg leave to return you my grateful thanks for so agreeable a gift, of which I can only have taken a look enough to lament that you do not intend to continue the work. Repeated and severe attacks of the gout forbid my entertaining visions of pleasures to come; but though I might not have the advantage of your labours, Sir, I wish too well to posterity not to be sorry that you check your hand.

Lord Buchan did me the honour lately of consulting me on portraits of illustrious Scots. I recollect that there is at Windsor a very good portrait of your countryman Duns Scotus, whose name struck me on just turning over your volume. A good print was made from that picture some years ago, but I believe it is now very scarce: as it is not worth while to trouble his Lordship with another letter for that purpose only, may I take the liberty, Sir, of begging you to mention it to his Lordship?

1932. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, March 22, 1779.

If your representative dignity is impaired westward, you may add to your Eastern titles those of 'Rose of India' and 'Pearl of Pondicherry[1].' The latter gem is now set in one of the vacant sockets of the British diadem.

I have nothing to subjoin to this high-flown paragraph that will at all keep pace with the majesty of it. I should have left to the *Gazette* to wish you joy, nor have begun a new letter without more materials, if I did not fear you would be still uneasy about your nephew. I hear he has, *since his parenthesis*, voted again with the court; therefore he has probably not taken a new *part*, but only made a Pindaric transition on a particular question. I have seen him but twice since his arrival, and from both those visits I had no reason to expect he would act differently from what you wished. Perhaps it may never happen again. I go so little into the world, that I don't at all know what company he frequents. He talked so reasonably and tenderly with regard to you, that I shall be much deceived if he often gives you any inquietude.

The place of Secretary of State is not replenished yet. Several different successors have been talked of. At least, at present, there is a little chance of its being supplied by the opposition. Their numbers have fallen off again, though they are more alert than they used to be. I do not love to foretell, because no Elijah left me his mantle, in which, it seems, the gift of prophecy resides; and, if I see clouds gathering, I less care to announce their contents to foreign

Letter 1932.—[1] Taken on Oct. 17, 1778, by the combined land and sea forces under Lieutenant-General Hector Monro and Admiral Sir Edward Vernon.

post offices. On the other hand, it is no secret, nor one to disguise if it were, that the French trade must suffer immensely by our captures.

Private news I know none. The bishops are trying to put a stop to one staple commodity of that kind, adultery. I do not suppose that they expect to lessen it; but, to be sure, it was grown to a sauciness that did call for a decenter veil. I do not think they have found out a good cure; and I am of opinion, too, that flagrancy proceeds from national depravity, which tinkering one branch will not remedy. Perhaps polished manners are a better proof of virtue in an age than of vice, though system-makers do not hold so: at least, decency has seldom been the symptom of a sinking nation.

When one talks on general themes, it is a sign of having little to say. It is not that there is a dearth of topics; but I only profess sending you information, necessary information, on events that really have happened, to guide you towards forming a judgement. At home, we are fed with magnificent hopes and promises that are never realized. For instance, to prove discord in America, Monsieur de la Fayette[2] was said to rail at the Congress, and their whole system and transactions. There is just published an intercourse between them that exhibits enthusiasm in him towards their cause, and the highest esteem for him on their side. For my part, I see as little chance of recovering America as of reconquering the Holy Land. Still I do not amuse you with visions on either side, but tell you nakedly what advantage has been gained or lost. This caution abbreviates my letters; but, in general, you can depend on what I tell you. Adieu!

[2] Marie Jean Gilbert Motier (1757–1834), Marquis de la Fayette. He left France to join the Americans at the beginning of the War of Independence. He was afterwards a prominent figure during the French Revolution.

Tuesday, 24th.

I hear this moment that an account is come this morning of D'Estaign with sixteen ships being blocked up by Byron at Martinico[3], and that Rowley[4] with eight more was expected by the latter in a day or two. D'Estaing, it is supposed, will be starved to surrender, and the island too. I do not answer for this intelligence or consequences; but, if the first is believed, you may be sure the rest is.

1933. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, March 28, 1779.

Your last called for no answer; and I have so little to tell you, that I only write to-day to avoid the air of remissness. I came hither on Friday, for this last week has been too hot to stay in London; but March is arrived this morning with his north-easterly malice, and I suppose will assert his old style claim to a third of April. The poor infant apricots will be the victims of that Herod of the almanack.

I have been much amused with new travels through Spain by a Mr. Swinburne[1]—at least with the account of the Alhambra, of the inner parts of which there are two beautiful prints. The Moors were the most polished, and had most taste of any people in the Gothic ages; and I hate the knave Ferdinand and his bigoted Queen for destroying them. These new travels are simple, and do tell one a little more than late voyagers, by whose accounts one would think there was nothing in Spain but muleteers and fandangos—in truth, there does not seem to be much worth seeing but prospects—

[3] Byron kept D'Estaing shut up at Martinique till June, when he escaped during Byron's absence at St. Christopher's.

[4] Rear-Admiral Joshua Rowley (d. 1790), created a Baronet in 1786.

Letter 1933. — [1] Henry (1743–1803), fourth son of Sir John Swinburne, third Baronet, of Capheaton, Northumberland.

and those, unless I were a bird, I would never visit, when the accommodations are so wretched.

Mr. Cumberland has given the town a masque, called *Calypso*, which is a prodigy of dullness. Would you believe, that such a sentimental writer would be so gross as to make cantharides one of the ingredients of the love-potion for enamouring Telemachus? If you think I exaggerate, here are the lines:

> To these, the hot Hispanian fly
> Shall bid his languid pulse beat high.

Proteus and Antiope are Minerva's missioners for securing the prince's virtue, and in recompense they are married, and crowned king and queen!

I have bought at Hudson's [2] sale a fine design of a chimney-piece, by Holbein, for Henry VIII.—If I had a room left, I would erect it. It is certainly not so Gothic as that in my Holbein room; but there is a great deal of taste for that bastard style. Perhaps it was executed at Nonsuch. I do intend, under Mr. Essex's inspection, to begin my offices next spring—it is late in my day, I confess, to return to brick and mortar; but I shall be glad to perfect my plan, or the next possessor will marry my castle to a Doric stable. There is a perspective through two or three rooms in the Alhambra, that might easily be improved into Gothic, though there seems but small affinity between them; and they might be finished within with Dutch smiles [3], and painting, or bits of ordinary marble, as there must be gilding. Mosaic seems to be their chief ornaments, for walls, ceilings, and floors. Fancy must sport in the furniture, and mottoes might be galant, and would be very Arabesque. I would have a mixture of colours, but with strict attention to harmony and taste; and some one should

[2] Thomas Hudson, the painter. He died at Twickenham in Jan. 1779.
[3] So in MS.; probably a slip for 'tiles.'

predominate, as supposing it the favourite colour of the lady who was sovereign of the knight's affections who built the house. Carpets are classically Mahometan, and fountains—but, alas, our climate till last summer was never romantic! Were I not so old, I would at least build—a Moorish novel—for you see my head runs on Granada—and by taking the most picturesque parts of the Mahometan and Catholic religions, and with the mixture of African and Spanish names, one might make something very agreeable—at least I will not give the hint to Mr. Cumberland. Adieu! Yours ever,

H. W.

1933*. To Thomas Astle.

Strawberry Hill, April 6, 1779.

Any company that you like to bring, dear Sir, to see this house, will always be very welcome. I am afraid I shall not be able to be here myself to show it to you on Saturday, but I will leave orders that you may see it at your leisure, and am with great regard, Sir,

Your most obedient
Humble servant,
Hor. Walpole.

1934. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Bedfordshire, April 8, 1779.

I did not answer your Ladyship's letter, as I generally do, the moment I received it, because I had nothing to tell you about the remnant of myself, which is the worst subject in the world. I have been six days at Strawberry Hill, and I think the soft south-west did me good; but I have a constant feverish heat that seems to be undermining my

Letter 1933*.—Not in C.; now first printed from copy of original in possession of Mr. Grenville H. Norcross.

ruins; however, its progress is very slow; and so if you please we will say no more of it; but your goodness in inquiring is written on my heart's last tablet. Mr. Mason was with me for two days: he is printing the third book of his *Garden*.

Lord Harrington[1] is gathered to his fathers, or rather, is taken from his *mothers*. Lord Beauchamp's son[2] is well again. Lord Harrington has left my Lady 2,500*l*. besides her jointure of 1,500*l*. a year; to Lady Anna Maria 6,000*l*.; 5,000*l*. to Mr. Stanhope[3], and an estate of 150*l*. a year; but there are so many debts that the legacies are more magnificent than generous. The charming house at St. James's is to be sold; but it is supposed the present Earl will purchase it.

This is all I have heard, Madam, since I came to town yesterday, which is perfectly empty; the grass grows in the streets, though nowhere else, for the climate is turned as Asiatic as the government; and it is to be hoped that in time there will be elephants and tigers of our own growth in the Sultan's gardens, to the great satisfaction of Sir William Chambers. I was pleased yesterday to see that, though everything old-fashioned is going out of date, we have still resources. If our trade decays we have new handicrafts: at Turnham Green I read on a large board—*manufacture of temples*. I suppose the Archbishop of York will set up looms in his diocese for Popish chapels, and Manchester weave dungeons for the Inquisition. The Pope's bull against the Dissenters' Bill is actually issued from the Clarendon printing-house. I was interrupted by the strangest story I ever heard, and which I cannot yet believe, though it is certainly true. Last night as Miss Wray[4] was getting into her coach in

LETTER 1934. — [1] William Stanhope, second Earl of Harrington.

[2] Hon. Francis Charles Seymour Conway, afterwards third Marquis of Hertford.

[3] Hon. Henry Stanhope, his second son; d. 1828.

[4] Miss Martha Ray, mistress of Lord Sandwich.

Covent Garden from the play, a clergyman shot her through the head, and then himself. She is dead; but he is alive to be hanged—in the room of Sir Hugh Palliser. Now, Madam, can one believe such a tale? How could poor Miss Wray have offended a divine? She was no enemy to the church militant or naval, to the Church of England, or the church of Paphos. I do not doubt but it will be found that the assassin was a Dissenter, and instigated by the Americans to give such a blow to the state. My servants have heard that the murderer was the victim's husband: methinks his jealousy was very long-suffering! *Tantaene animis caelestibus irae!* and that he should not have compounded for a deanery! What trials Lord Sandwich goes through! he had better have one for all.

Friday, 9th.

I gave David this letter yesterday, and had forgotten to seal it, which he did not perceive till I was gone out for the evening. Instead of sealing it he kept it for me till this morning after I had written my second. I send both to show I had been punctual, though all the novelty is evaporated, and my intelligence is not worth a farthing more than the newspaper.

April 9, 1779.

Ladies, said a certain philosopher, always tell their minds in the postscript. As that is the habitation of truth, I send you, Madam, a little more truth than there was in my narrative of yesterday, which was warm from the first breath of rumour: yet though this is only a postscript I will not answer for its perfect veracity. It is the most authentic account I have yet been able to collect of so strange a story, of which no doubt you are curious to know more.

The assassin's name is Hackman; he is brother to a reputable tradesman in Cheapside, and is of a very pleasing figure himself, and most engaging behaviour. About five

years ago he was an officer in the 66th Regiment, and being quartered at Huntingdon, pleased so much as to be invited to the oratorios at Hinchinbrook, and was much caressed there. Struck with Miss Ray's charms he proposed marriage; but she told him she did not choose to carry a knapsack. He went to Ireland, and there changed the colour of his cloth, and at his return, I think not long ago, renewed his suit, hoping a cassock would be more tempting than a gorget; but in vain. Miss Wray, it seems, has been out of order, and abroad but twice all the winter. She went to the play on Wednesday night for the second time with Galli the singer. During the play the desperate lover was at the Bedford Coffee House, and behaved with great calmness, and drank a glass of capillaire. Towards the conclusion, he sallied into the piazza, waiting till he saw his victim handed by Mr. Macnamara. He came behind her, pulled her by the gown, and on her turning round, clapped the pistol to her forehead, and shot her through the head. With another pistol he then attempted to shoot himself, but the ball only grazing his brow, he tried to dash out his own brains with the pistol, and is more wounded by those blows than by the ball.

Lord Sandwich was at home expecting her to supper at half an hour after ten. On her not returning an hour later, he said something must have happened: however, being tired, he went to bed at half an hour after eleven, and was scarce in bed before one of his servants came in and said Miss Ray was shot. He stared, and could not comprehend what the fellow meant; nay, lay still, which is full as odd a part of the story as any. At twelve came a letter from the surgeon to confirm the account; and then he was extremely afflicted.

Now, upon the whole, Madam, is not the story full as strange as ever it was? Miss Ray has six children, the

eldest son is fifteen, and she was at least three times as much. To bear a hopeless passion for five years, and then murder one's mistress—I don't understand it! If the story clears up at all, your Ladyship shall have a sequel. These circumstances I received from Lord Hertford, who heard them at court yesterday from the Lords of the Admiralty. I forgot that the Galli swooned away on the spot.

I do not love tragic events *en pure perte*. If they do happen, I would have them historic. This is only of kin to history, and tends to nothing. It is very impertinent in one Hackman, to rival Herod, and shoot Mariamne—and *that* Mariamne a kept mistress! and yet it just sets curiosity agog, because she belongs to Lord Sandwich, at a critical moment—and yet he might as well have killed any other inhabitant of Covent Garden.

1935. To the Rev. William Cole.

Arlington Street, April 12, 1779.

As your gout was so concise, I will not condole on it, but I am sorry you are liable to it if you do but take the air.

Thank you for telling me of the vendible curiosities at the alderman's. For St. Peter's portrait to hang to a fairy's watch, I shall not think of it, both as I do not believe it very like, and as it is composed of invisible writing, for which my eyes are not young enough. In truth, I have almost left off making purchases; I have neither room for anything more, nor inclination for them, as I reckon everything very dear, when one has so little time to enjoy it. However, I cannot say but the plates by Rubens do tempt me a little—yet, as I do not care to buy even Rubens in a poke, I should wish to know if the alderman would let me see if it were but one.

Would he be persuaded? I would pay for the carriage, though I should not buy them.

Lord de Ferrers will be infinitely happy with the sight of the pedigree, and I will certainly tell him of it, and how kind you are.

Strype's account, or rather Stow's, of Richard's person is very remarkable—but I have done with endeavouring at truth. Weeds grow more naturally than what one plants. I hear your Cantabrigians are still unshaken Chattertonians. Many men are about falsehood, like girls about the first man that makes love to them; a handsomer, a richer, or even a sincerer lover cannot eradicate the first impression—but a sillier swain, or a sillier legend, sometimes gets into the head of the miss or the learned man, and displaces the antecedent folly. Truth's kingdom is not of this world.

I do not know whether our clergy are growing Mahometans or not: they certainly are not what they profess themselves—but as you and I should not agree perhaps in assigning the same defects to them, I will not enter on a subject which I have promised you to drop. All I allude to now is the shocking murder of Miss Ray by a divine. In my own opinion, we are growing more fit for Bedlam than for Mahomet's paradise. The poor criminal in question, I am persuaded, is mad—and the misfortune is, the law does not know how to define the shades of madness; and thus, there are twenty out-pensioners of Bedlam, for one that is confined. You, dear Sir, have chosen a wiser path to happiness by depending on yourself for amusement. Books and past ages draw one into no scrapes; and perhaps it is best not to know much of men till they are dead. I wish you health; you want nothing else.

Yours most truly,

H. W.

1936. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1779.

I am grieved to hear of your having the rheumatism so acutely in your head. Though it is not dangerous, like the gout, its duration is more fluctuating, and not consistent in a fit. I trust it will be gone long before I hear again; but the suspense will be very uneasy to me, and one of the evils of such great distance.

I was glad to hear your nephew had himself given you an account of his parenthesis of opposition, as you can speak more freely to him than if you had learnt it only from me. Very uncertain it is when I shall see him again, which I have done but thrice; nor could I expect more from so much younger a man. We live in very different worlds, or rather I live almost out of it, and he quite in it, and yet not where I do. At this time of year, too, I am here half the week. I hope he will give you no more uneasiness; but you must have patience if he does. Nephews and nieces are not very tractable. My own uncle did not find *me* so; and I do not wonder at others. One must wrap oneself up in oneself. People have difficulty enough of conducting their own children—mercy on us, were we to answer for collaterals.

There have been no Parliamentary clouds, because during the holydays there has been no Parliament: but the political horizon does not clear up. I bade you a little expect the conquest of Martinico; but that prospect seems pretty much vanished. If the letters yesterday from France speak truth, our trust in Spain is dispelled likewise: it is said she has declared for the Americans too, and it has been whispered here for these two days:—there is no occasion to comment on that addition to our load!—nor shall I tell

you other ugly symptoms. A Spanish war is as much as you can digest at once. If I alarm you on bad grounds, it will make amends for my having vainly promised you Martinico; though I never warrant but what is actually passed.

Though Sir Hugh Palliser's trial has been begun this week, the public does not honour it with the same attention as Keppel's. It does not brighten for the Vice-Admiral.

For the last week all conversation has been engrossed by a shocking murder, committed on the person of a poor woman connected with a most material personage now on the great stage. You will have seen some mention of it in the papers; I mean the assassination of Miss Ray, Lord Sandwich's mistress, by a clergyman, who had been an officer, and was desperately in love with her, though she is between thirty and forty, and has had nine children. She was allowed to be most engaging; and so was the wretched lover, who had fixed his hopes of happiness on marrying her, and had been refused, after some encouragement; I know not how much. On his trial yesterday he behaved very unlike a madman, and wishes not to live. He is to suffer on Monday, and I shall rejoice when it is over; for it is shocking to reflect that there is a human being at this moment in so deplorable a situation. It would be foolish to repeat that we are a nation of lunatics; yet, with so many outward and visible signs, can one avoid thinking so? Alas! we are likely to undergo sharp purgations, that may bring us to our senses again! The loss of blood has not yet cured us. For the loss of money, it has had but the same effect on the nation as on our youthful gamesters—it has made us more extravagant.

I shall reserve the rest of my paper till Tuesday: perhaps I may be able to contradict the Spanish article.

Tuesday.

No; I do not affirm nor deny: however, nothing is yet public, and I imagine there is still some negotiation going on, as the Spanish Ambassador receives frequent couriers, and writes much.

The poor assassin was executed yesterday. The same day Charles Fox moved for the removal of Lord Sandwich, but was beaten by a large majority; for in Parliament the ministers can still gain victories. Adieu!

1937. To the Rev. William Cole.

Dear Sir, Arlington Street, April 20, 1779.

I have received the plates very safely, but hope you, nor the alderman, will take it ill that I return them. They are extremely pretty and uncommonly well preserved—but I am sure they are not by Rubens, nor, I believe, after his designs, for I am persuaded they are older than his time. In truth, I have a great many of the same sort, and do not wish for more. I shall send them back on Thursday by the Fly, and will beg you to inquire after them, and I trust they will arrive as safely as they did to

Yours ever,
H. W.

1938. To the Rev. William Cole.

April 23, 1779.

I ought not to trouble you so often when you are not well: but that is the very cause of my writing now. You left off abruptly from disorder, and therefore I wish to know it is gone.

The plates I hope got home safe. They are pretty, especially the reverses; but the drawing in general is bad.

Pray tell me what you mean by a *priced* catalogue of the

pictures at Houghton. Is it a printed one? if it is, where is it to be had?—odd questions from *me*; and which I should not wish to have mentioned as coming from me. I have been told to-day that they are actually sold to the Czarina—*sic transit!*—mortifying enough, were not everything transitory! We must recollect that our griefs and pains are so, as well as our joys and glories; and, by balancing the account, a degree of comfort is to be extracted.—Adieu! I shall be heartily glad to receive a better account of you.

1939. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, April 24, 1779.

I BEGIN my letters here, because I am alone and have leisure, of which I cannot be sure in town; and, should I have any sudden news to send, I might not have time to add the trifles I may wish to add.

I met your nephew the other night at the Duchess of Montrose's[1], and was happy to hear he had received a more recent and better account of you than what you gave me of the rheumatism in your head. I will send you by him bootikins for both hands and feet. I sometimes have rheumatic pains in the shoulder in the evening, and a bootikin on my hand immediately removes it. I should hope it would be as efficacious for the head, should it return thither, contrary to my earnest wishes.

The decision of Spain is not publicly known yet. In France they expect it in their favour[2]. Some here still think it will be a neutrality. Did one judge any longer by the stocks, the augury would be good. They cannot reasonably have risen, as they have done, on the diminutive

LETTER 1939.—[1] Lady Lucy Manners, daughter of the Duke of Rutland. Lady Lucy Mann, Sir Horace's wife, was related to her. *Walpole.*

[2] The looked-for accommodation did not take place. *Walpole.*

success in Georgia, which has not even encouraged the victors to hope to advance, without what they are far from receiving, a reinforcement. Nor are we more prosperous against D'Estaing; nor is the capture of eight or nine Domingo-men very beneficial to stockholders: but so much industry is used of late in bolstering up the stocks, that they are no longer the weather-glass of fortune, but part of the mask employed to disguise the nation's own face to itself.

There has been a motion in each House this week for the removal of Lord Sandwich; but both Houses think him as white as snow. Palliser, probably, will be equally blanched. The Howes, on the other hand, will come immaculate out of the furnace: I believe, if the Duchess of Kingston was to return, she might be voted into her old post of Maid of Honour. Lord Lyttelton, who thinks he has talents for Secretary of State, and that want of principles is no impediment (it was not to his being Justice in Eyre), has again turned against the court on not obtaining the seals. The grass would grow in our Temple of Virtue, if it was the sole vestibule to our Temple of Honours. Governor Johnstone, having had such clumsy success as ambassador of peace to America, has made his bargain, and is turned into a commodore of a cruising squadron. It is judicious enough, I think, to convert such men as go upon the highway of fortune into privateers; but what a figure do we make in Europe! Unable to raise the sums we want for the war, the members of that Parliament that is told so are yet occupied in preying on the distresses of the Government! What comments must Dr. Franklin make on every newspaper to the French ministers!

27th.

I find nothing new in town. Rumours of peace continual. I doubt it is easier for both sides to be sick of the war, than to know how to agree. I doubt, too, that *we* want peace

more than we desire it; and, as we must buy it dear, we shall not be so ready to pay the price. It will not be very sincere to the Americans, if we do conclude; and though intentional insincerity often promotes peace, and at least makes the sufferers shut their eyes to their own loss, we have betrayed such propensity to duplicity, that the other side will aggravate the bargain; for, as cunning is no new invention, it is equally in the power of both parties to employ it. Mankind will not remember that honesty cannot be detected.

I should not send away this scrap, and with so little intelligence, if I were not glad to tell you that I am easier about your disorder. I will not write again soon without more substantial news.

1940. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Thursday.

I cannot think of going to the play to-night, Madam; nor can be out of the way of hearing the first news that shall come. I have done what was right; I approved and applauded Mr. Conway's going instantly[1]; but I cannot pretend to be easy now he is gone. My feelings for my friends are stronger and more sincere than my philosophy; and great is the difference between advising them to act as they ought, and being indifferent to the consequence.

1941. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, May 9, 1779.

An invasion announced by the common post from Paris, attempted, repulsed, given up, and known here: all this has

Letter 1940.—Hitherto printed as part of the letter to Lady Ossory of Nov. 18, 1777. (See *Notes and Queries*, Sept. 15, 1900.)

[1] To Jersey. See the following letter.

happened in eight days, and in miniature; but it was a large object, and a long and anxious interval to me, for the object was Jersey, Mr. Conway's government, and he went post to defend it. He has no idea of danger, and has the strongest one of doing his duty to a scruple; but I will now be methodical, for *you* want information, not a rhapsody on my sensations.

On the 1st of May, yesterday sevennight, there were forty letters in town that proclaimed an intended attack on Jersey, of fifteen hundred men commanded [by] a Prince of Nassau, who was to be declared king of the island. A secret expedition advertised with so slender a force, exceeded by the troops on the isle, to say nothing of the ridicule of such a Roi d'Yvetot, did not make much impression: however, Mr. Conway spread his wings, with my approbation; and, on confirmation arriving on Monday, set out that night. It seems the islanders, besides provoking France by their privateers and numerous captures, had imprudently advertised a sale, in August next, of prizes, to the amount of a vast sum, which would have been a kingdom indeed to a little necessitous Prince. He collected a small army of vagabonds, like his predecessor Romulus; but who had so little taste for the adventure when its destination was known, that he was forced to select fifty men from his more regular regiment to defend his person against the companions of his armament. It happened that Admiral Arbuthnot[1], who was going to convoy four thousand recruits to America, had been detained, though probably the French thought him sailed; and, hearing of the invasion, immediately sailed to Jersey, without staying for orders. The attack, however, had been made on the 1st of the month: the French had at-

LETTER 1941.—[1] Admiral Marriot Arbuthnot (d. 1794), recently appointed to command on the North American station.

tempted to land, but Lord Seaforth's[2] new-raised regiment of seven hundred Highlanders, assisted by some militia and some artillery, made a brave stand and repelled the intruders; and, as every *Nassau* does not conquer a British island merely by his presence, the visionary monarch sailed back to France on the 2nd, and King George and Viceroy Conway remain sovereigns of Jersey—whom God long preserve!

We heard of the repulse on Thursday; but it was not till late in the night of Friday that an account came of the retreat, and I did not learn it till Saturday morning; in which interval there seemed to be twice eight-and-forty hours, and yet I had concluded that the French would be retired before Mr. Conway could reach his dominions. We had reports of the Brest fleet being sailed, and this little episode does look a little like a feint. Negotiation is said to be at an end or a pause. Arbuthnot's activity, though greatly commendable, is a detrimental delay; and we have reason enough to expect other damage. I did hint to you that we had more thorns than one in our pillow: it is now too publicly known to be disguised any longer, that Ireland has much the air of Americanizing. Our oppressive partiality to two or three manufacturing towns in England has revolted the Irish, and they have entered into combinations against purchasing English goods, in terms more offensive than the first associations of the colonies. In short, we have for four or five years displayed no alacrity or address, but in provoking our friends and furnishing weapons of annoyance to our enemies; and the unhappy facility with which the Parliament has subscribed to all these oversights has deceived the Government into security, and encouraged it to pull almost the whole fabric

[2] Kenneth Mackenzie (1744–1781), first Earl of Seaforth of the new creation, known from 1766 to 1771 as Viscount Fortrose.

on its own head. We can escape but by concessions and disgrace; and, when we attain peace, the terms will prove that Parliamentary majorities have voted away the wisdom, glory, and power of the nation.

The House of Commons has exposed itself wofully these last days in a less affair. They have refused, voted, unvoted, and revoted an inquiry into the conduct of the war; and all the generals at the bar have declared the impossibility of conquering America: so, the House has nothing to do to preserve its consequence, but to vote it *shall* still be conquered.

Palliser's trial has ended as shamefully. He is acquitted, *with honour*, of not having obeyed his Admiral's signals: which is termed blamable for not having given the reason why he did not; and that reason was the rottenness of his mast, with which he returned to Portsmouth, without its being repaired yet. The world is expecting his restoration; for, when Keppel risked his own reputation to save Palliser's, ought not the latter to be recompensed for accusing his benefactor? But I am sick of specifying all our ignominy; I wish I had any tittle-tattle of less consequence to fill my letters with. I will go answer yours, and try to forget England, as it has forgotten itself! Oh, but you ask if Byron has beaten D'Estaing and taken Martinico? Not quite; on the contrary, our conquerors are swept away by a mortality in Santa Lucia and in Georgia. Content yourself with privateering; we have no other success.

The Presbyterians of Scotland will not condole with you on the Pope's illness; they forswear him tooth and nail. Mrs. Anne Pitt is confined, and, the last time I heard of her, was very bad. Make many compliments, pray, for me to the house of Lucan; but, between you and me, I am not at all delighted with their intending to bring me a present. I do not love presents, and much less from anybody but

very dear friends. That family and I are upon very civil terms; our acquaintance is of modern date, and rather waned than improved. Lady Lucan has an astonishing genius for copying whatever she sees. The pictures I lent her from my collection, and some advice I gave her, certainly brought her talent to marvellous perfection in five months; for before, she painted in crayons, and as ill as any fine lady in England. She models in wax, and has something of a turn towards poetry; but her prodigious vivacity makes her too volatile in everything, and my Lord follows wherever she leads. This is only for your private ear. I desire to remain as well as I am with them; but we shall never be more intimate than we are. I am not at all acquainted with your Lord Bishop [3] and my lady his wife. His mother [4], who was much my friend, I believe did not highly reverence his sincerity; I never in my life met him at her house.

Adieu! my dear Sir. Do not let rumours, good or bad, agitate you. Bear public misfortunes with firmness. Private griefs hurry away our thoughts, and belong solely to ourselves; but we may be excused taking more than our share in general calamities.

1942. To the Rev. William Cole.

Arlington Street, May 21, 1779.

As Mr. Essex has told me that you still continue out of order, I am impatient to hear from yourself how you are. Do send me a line; I hope it will be a satisfactory one.

Do you know that Dr. Ducarel has published a translation of a *History of the Abbey of Bec*? There is a pretty print to it; and one very curious circumstance, at least valuable

[3] Hon. Frederick Hervey, Bishop of Derry, afterwards fourth Earl of Bristol. His wife was Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Jermyn Davers, of Rougham, Suffolk.

[4] Mary Lepel, Baroness Hervey.

to us disciples of Alma Mater Etonensis. The ram-hunting[1] was derived from the manor of Wrotham in Norfolk, which formerly belonged to Bec, and being forfeited, with other alien priories, was bestowed by Henry VI on our college. I do not repine at reading any book from which I can learn a single fact that I like to know. For the lives of the abbots, they were, according to the author, all pinks of piety and holiness—but there [are] a few other facts amusing, especially with regard to the customs of those savage times—especially that the Empress Matilda was buried in a bull's hide, and afterwards had a tomb covered with silver.

There is another new book called *Sketches from Nature*, in two volumes, by Mr. G. Keate, in which I found one fact too, that, if authentic, is worth knowing. The work is an imitation of Sterne, and has a sort of merit, though nothing that arrives at originality. For the foundation of the church of Reculver, he quotes a MS. said to be written by a Dominican friar of Canterbury, and preserved at Louvain. The story is evidently metamorphosed into a novel, and has very little of an antique air; but it affirms that the monkish author attests the beauty of Richard III. This is very absurd, if invention, and has nothing to do with the story; and therefore one should suppose it genuine. I have desired Dodsley to ask Mr. Keate if there truly exists such a MS.—if there does, I own I wish he had printed it rather than his own production; for I agree with Mr. Gray, 'that any man living may make a book worth reading, if he will but set down with truth what he

LETTER 1942.—[1] 'I remember another ancient custom or tenure at Eton College, which was hunting the ram. On a certain day in August, a ram was turned loose in the playing-fields and the boys hunted it with knotted clubs till they killed him. Latterly he was hamstringed before turned out and immediately dispatched. Now I believe the practice is totally dropped.' MS. note by Walpole in his copy of Robertson's *Topographical Survey* (1792).

has seen or heard, no matter whether the book is well written or not.'—Let those who can write glean.

1943. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Arlington Street, May 22, 1779.

If you hear of us no oftener than we of you, you will be as much behindhand in news as my Lady Lyttelton. We have seen a traveller that saw you in your island[1], but it sounds like hearing of Ulysses. Well! we must be content. You are not only not dethroned, but owe the safety of your dominions to your own skill in fortification. If we do not hear of your extending your conquests, why, it is not less than all our modern heroes have done, whom prophets have foretold and *Gazettes* celebrated—or who have foretold and celebrated themselves. Pray be content to be cooped up in an island that has no neighbours, when the Howes and Clintons and Dunmores and Burgoynes and Campbells are not yet got beyond the great river—Inquiry[2]! To-day's papers say that the *little* Prince of Orange is to invade you again; but we trust Sir James Wallace[3] has clipped his wings so close, that they will not grow again this season, though he is so ready to *fly*.

Nothing material has happened since I wrote last—so, as every moment of a civil war is precious, every one has been turned to the interest of diversion. There have been three masquerades, an Installation, and the ball of the Knights at the Haymarket this week; not to mention Almack's festino, Lady Spencer's, Ranelagh and Vauxhall, operas and plays. The Duchess of Bolton too saw masks—

Letter 1943.—[1] Mr. Conway was now at his government, Jersey. *Walpole.*

[2] The Parliamentary inquiry which took place in the House of Commons on the conduct of the American War. *Walpole.*

[3] Admiral Sir James Wallace, Knight (1731–1803), who had destroyed the vessels assembled in a bay on the coast of Normandy with a view to a renewed attack on Jersey.

so many, that the floor gave way, and the company in the dining-room were near falling on the heads of those in the parlour, and exhibiting all that has not yet appeared in Doctors' Commons. At the Knights' ball was such a profusion of strawberries, that people could hardly get into the supper-room. I could tell you more, but I do not love to exaggerate.

Lady Ailesbury told me this morning that Lord Bristol has got a calf with two feet to each leg: I am convinced it is by the Duchess of Kingston, who has two of everything where others have but one. Adieu! I am going to sup with Mrs. Abington, and hope Mrs. Clive will not hear of it.

Yours ever,
HOR. WALPOLE.

1944. To Sir Horace Mann.

Arlington Street, May 29, 1779.

I HAVE two letters from you unanswered of the 4th and 15th of this month. I begin to reply to them; though I believe my response will not set out before June for want of corporality. The best news I know is what you tell me of the Spanish monarch's resolution of remaining neuter. We seem able to cope with France, who makes war in our own piddling style. We both fish for islets that used to escape through the meshes of former military drag-nets. Some attempt on Ireland we expect; I hope the Prince of Nassau will command it. All this last week we were whispered ministerially into a belief of Byron having demolished, taken, and killed D'Estaing and all his squadron. Some doubted whether it was not an artifice to fill the loan; and so it has proved. The two admirals looked at one another, but did not hurt a pendant of each other's

head. The House of Commons sits from day to day, examining into the conduct of all the other generals and admirals that have been looking at the Americans and French for these five years, and of the ministers who sent them to look the colonies into unlimited submission. Future historians will have a brave collection of papers to revel in.

You shall certainly have my tragedy[1] when your nephew returns; but I doubt it will shock more than please you, for nothing can be more disgusting than the subject. I approve and exhort you not to preach to your nephew. Wait till you see him, and then you can instil your sentiments by degrees. As he has already corrected many effervescences, I trust to his good sense and good heart for his still improving; but, believe me, there must be a very solid fund to resist the depravation of this country. It is lost, it is distracted. It sinks every day, and yet its extravagance and dissipation rather augment than subside. Though we have danced like Bacchanals all the winter, there is a new subscription on foot for a sumptuous ball at the Pantheon. We are like the Israelites that capered round the golden calf, though they were to fight their way out of the desert. I check my hand; it is grievous to condemn one's country! I ask myself, if I am not grown old and splenetic; but, alas, America lost, credit supported by gross falsehoods, all comfort hanging on a King of Spain's mood: one had need be very young to dance without reflection!

May 31st.

I must finish my letter to-night, for I go out of town to-morrow for the summer, and leave the Parliament to give balls or supplies as it pleases. Lord Cornwallis sails to-day to command America, but the fleet is not yet gone.

LETTER 1944.—[1] *The Mysterious Mother. Walpole.*

I remember, when I was a boy, hearing that it had been a great joke in Queen Anne's war, that Lord Peterborough was galloping about in Spain inquiring for his army—Lord Cornwallis will have none to hunt for.

The old Duke of Rutland is dead, at eighty-four. I think he had been Knight of the Garter above fifty years.

The Irish do not grow into better humour—I know nothing that is improved but our climate—so I hope we shall preserve *this part* of the island at least.

P.S. Do not expect me to be so assiduous in summer, as I have been of late; nay, you may wish I should have no occasion to be so.

1945. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, June 2, 1779.

I am most sincerely rejoiced, dear Sir, that you find yourself at all better, and trust it is an omen of farther amendment. Mr. Essex surprised me by telling me, that you, who keep yourself so warm and so numerously clothed, do yet sometimes, if the sun shines, sit and write in your garden for hours at a time. It is more than I should readily do, whose habitudes are so very different from yours. Your complaints seem to demand perspiration—but I do not venture to advise. I understand no constitution but my own, and should kill Milo, if I managed him as I treat myself. I sat in a window on Saturday, with the east wind blowing in my neck till near two in the morning—and it seems to have done me good, for I am better within these two days than I have been these six months. My spirits have been depressed, and my nerves so aspen, that the smallest noise disturbed me. To-day I do not feel a complaint, which is something at near sixty-two.

I don't know whether I have not misinformed you, nor am sure it was Dr. Ducarel who translated the account of the Abbey of Beck—he gave it to Mr. Lort, but I am not certain he ever published it. You was the first that notified to me the fifth volume of the *Archæologia.* I am not much more edified than usual; but there are three pretty prints of reginal seals. Mr. Pegge's[1] tedious dissertation, which he calls a brief one, about the foolish legend of St. George, is despicable. All his arguments are equally good for proving the existence of the dragon.

What diversion might laughers make of the Society! Dolly Pentraeth, the old woman of Mousehole, and Mr. Penneck's nurse, v. p. 81, would have furnished Foote with two personages for a farce. The same grave Judge's[2] dissertation on patriarchal customs seems to have as much to do with British antiquities, as the Lapland witches, that sell wind—and pray what business has the Society with Roman inscriptions in Dalmatia? I am most pleased with the account of Nonsuch, imperfect as it is. It appears to have been but a villa, and not considerable for a royal one. You see, lilacs were then a novelty.—Well, I am glad they publish away. The vanity of figuring in these repositories will make many persons contribute their MSS., and every now and then something valuable will come to light, which its own intrinsic merit might not have saved.

I know nothing more of Houghton. I should certainly be glad to have the priced catalogue; and if you will lend me yours, my printer shall transcribe it—but I am in no hurry. I conceive faint hopes, as the sale is not concluded —however, I take care not to flatter myself.

I think I told you I had purchased, at Mr. Ives's sale, a handsome coat in painted glass, of Hobart impaling

Letter 1945.—[1] Rev. Samuel Pegge (1704–1796).
[2] Hon. Daines Barrington.

Boleyn—but I can find no such match in the pedigree—yet I have heard that Blickling belonged to Anne Boleyn's father. Pray reconcile all this to me.

Lord de Ferrers is to dine here on Saturday; and I have got to treat him an account of ancient paintings, formerly in the hall of Tamworth Castle; they are mentioned in Warton's *Observations on the Fairy Queen*, vol. i. p. 43.

Do not put yourself to pain to answer this. Only be assured that I shall be happy to know when you are able to write with ease. You must leave your cloister, if your transcribility leaves you.

1946. To Dr. Lort.

Strawberry Hill, June 4, 1779.

I am sorry, dear Sir, you could not let me have the pleasure of your company: but, I own, you have partly, not entirely, made me amends by the sight of the curious manuscript, which I return you, with your other book of Inaugurations.

The sight of the manuscript was particularly welcome to me, because the long visit of Henry VI and his uncle Gloucester to St. Edmund's Bury accounts for those rare altar tablets that I bought at Mr. Ives's sale, on which are incontestably the portraits of Duke Humphrey, Cardinal Beaufort, and the same archbishop that is in my marriage of Henry VI. I know the house of Lancaster were patrons of St. Edmund's Bury; but so long a visit is demonstration.

The fourth person on my panels is unknown. Over his head is a coat of arms. It may be that of W. Curteys the abbot—or the alderman, as he is in scarlet. His figure, and the Duke's, are far superior to the other two, and worthy of a good Italian master. The Cardinal and the Archbishop are in the dry hard manner of the age. I wish you would

call and look at them: they are at Mr. Bonus's in Oxford Road: the two prelates are much damaged. I peremptorily enjoined Bonus to repair only, and not repaint them; and thus, by putting him out of his way, I put him so much out of humour too, that he has kept them these two years, and not finished them yet. I design them for the four void spaces in my chapel, on the sides of the shrine. The Duke of Gloucester's face is so like, though younger, that it proves I guessed right at his figure in my 'Marriage.' The tablets came out of the Abbey of Bury, were procured by old Peter Le Neve, Norroy, and came by his widow's marriage to Tom Martin, at whose sale Mr. Ives bought them. We have very few princely portraits so ancient, so authentic, and none so well painted as the Duke and fourth person. These were the insides of the doors, which I had split into two, and value them extremely. This account, I think, will be more satisfactory to you than notes.

Pray tell me how you like the pictures when you have examined them. I shall search in Edmondson's new Vocabulary of Arms for the coat, which contains three bulls' heads on six pieces; but the colours are either white and black, or the latter is become so by time. I hope you are not going out of town yet; I shall probably be there some day in next week.

I see advertised a book something in the way of your Inaugurations, called *Le Costume*; do you know anything of it? Can you tell me who is the author of the *Second Anticipation* on the Exhibition? Is it not Barry the painter?

Your much obliged,
Hor. Walpole.

1947. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, Saturday, June 5, 1779.

I write to you more seldom than I am disposed to do, from having nothing positive to tell you, and from being unwilling to say and unsay every minute something that is reported positively. The confident assertions of the victory over D'Estaing are totally vanished; and they who invented them now declaim as bitterly against Byron, as if he had deceived them—as they did against Keppel. This day se'nnight there was a great alarm about Ireland; which was far from being all invention, though not an absolute insurrection, as was said. The case, I believe, was this:—The court, in order to break the volunteer army established by the Irish themselves, endeavoured to persuade a body in Lady Blayney's county of Monaghan to enlist in the militia—which they took indignantly. They said they had great regard for Lady Blayney[1] and Lord Clermont; but to act under them would be acting under the King, and that was by no means their intention. There have since been motions for inquiries what steps the ministers have taken to satisfy the Irish—and these they have imprudently rejected—which will not tend to pacification. The ministers have been pushed, too, on the article of Spain, and could not deny that all negotiation is at an end—though they will not own farther. However, the Spanish Ambassador is much out of humour. From Paris they write confidently of the approaching declaration; and Lord Sandwich, I hear, has said in a very mixed company, that it was folly not to expect it. There is another million asked and given on a vote of

Letter 1947.—[1] Mary (d. 1790), daughter and heir of Sir Alexander Cairnes, Baronet; m. (1) Cadwallader Blayney, seventh Baron Blayney; (2) Colonel John Murray. Lord Clermont was her son-in-law.

credit; and Lord North has boasted of such mines for next year, that one would think he believed next year would never come.

The inquiry[2] goes on, and Lord Harrington[3] did himself and Burgoyne honour. Barré and Governor Johnstone have had warm words, and Burke has been as frantic for the Roman Catholics as Lord George Gordon against them. The Parliament, it is said, is to rise on the 21st.

You will not collect from all this that our prospect clears up. I fear there is not more discretion in the treatment of Ireland than of America. The court seems to be infatuated, and to think that nothing is of any consequence but a majority in Parliament—though they have totally lost all power but that of provoking. Fortunate it had been for the King and kingdom, had the court had no majority for these six years! America had still been ours!—and all the lives and all the millions we have squandered! A majority that has lost thirteen provinces by bullying and vapouring, and the most childish menaces, will be a brave countermatch for France and Spain, and a rebellion in Ireland! In short, it is plain that there is nothing a majority in Parliament can do, but outvote a minority; and yet by their own accounts one would think they could not do even that. I saw a paper t'other day that began with this Iricism, 'As the minority have lost us thirteen provinces,' &c. I know nothing the minority have done, or been suffered to do, but restore the Roman Catholic religion—and that too was by the desire of the court.

This is, however, the present style. They announced with infinite applause a new production of Tickell:—it has appeared, and is a most paltry performance. It is called the

[2] Into the conduct of the American War. *Walpole.*

[3] Charles Stanhope, third Earl of Harrington. He had been Aide-de-Camp to Burgoyne.

Cassette Verte of M. de Sartine, and pretends to be his correspondence with the opposition. Nay, they are so pitifully mean as to laugh at Dr. Franklin, who has such thorough reason to sit and laugh at them. What triumph it must be to him to see a miserable pamphlet all the revenge they can take! There is another, still duller, called *Opposition Mornings*, in which you are lugged in. In truth, it is a compliment to any man to except him out of the number of those that have contributed to the shocking disgraces inflicted on this undone country! When Lord Chatham was minister, he never replied to abuse but by a victory.

I know no private news: I have been here ever since Tuesday, enjoying my tranquillity, as much as an honest man can do who sees his country ruined. It is just such a period as makes philosophy wisdom. There are great moments when every man is called on to exert himself—but when folly, infatuation, delusion, incapacity, and profligacy fling a nation away, and it concurs itself, and applauds its destroyers, a man who has lent no hand to the mischief, and can neither prevent nor remedy the mass of evils, is fully justified in sitting aloof and beholding the tempest rage, with silent scorn and indignant compassion. Nay, I have, I own, some comfortable reflections. I rejoice that there is still a great continent of Englishmen who will remain free and independent, and who laugh at the impotent majorities of a prostitute Parliament. I care not whether General Burgoyne and Governor Johnstone cross over and figure in, and support or oppose; nor whether Mr. Burke, or the Superior of the Jesuits, is High Commissioner to the Kirk of Scotland. My ideas are such as I have always had, and are too plain and simple to comprehend modern confusions; and, therefore, they suit with those of few men. What will be the issue of this chaos, I know not, and probably shall not see. I do see with satisfaction, *that what*

was meditated has failed by the grossest folly; and when one has escaped the worst, lesser evils must be endured with patience.

After this dull effusion, I will divert you with a story that made me laugh this morning till I cried. You know my Swiss, David, and his incomprehensible pronunciation. He came to me, and said, 'Auh! dar is Meses Ellis wants some of your large flags to put in her great O.' With much ado, I found out that Mrs. Ellis had sent for leave to take up some flags out of my meadow for her grotto.

I hope in a few days to see Lady Ailesbury and Miss Jennings here; I have writ to propose it. What are your intentions? Do you stay till you have made your island impregnable? I doubt it will be our only one that will be so.

1948. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway.

Strawberry Hill, June 16, 1779.

Your Countess was here last Thursday, and received a letter from you, that told us how slowly you receive ours. When you will receive this I cannot guess; but it dates a new era, which you with reason did not care to look at as possible. In a word, behold a Spanish war! I must detail a little to increase your wonder. I heard here the day before yesterday that it was likely; and that night received a letter from Paris, telling me (it was of the 6th) that Monsieur de Beauveau was going, they knew not whither, at the head of twenty-five thousand men, with three lieutenant-generals and six or eight maréchaux-de-camp under him. Yesterday I went to town, and Thomas Walpole happened to call on me. He, who used to be informed early, did not believe a word either of a Spanish war or a French expedition. I saw some other persons in the evening as ignorant.

At night I went to sup at Richmond House. The Duke said the Brest fleet was certainly sailed, and had got the start of ours by twelve days; that Monsieur de Beauveau was on board with a large sum of money, and with white and *red* cockades; and that there would certainly be a Spanish war. He added that the opposition were then pressing in the House of Commons to have the Parliament continue sitting, and urging to know if we were not at the eve of a Spanish war; but the ministers persisted in the prorogation for to-morrow or Friday, and would not answer on Spain.

I said I would make you wonder. But no; why should the Parliament continue to sit? Are not the ministers and the Parliament the same thing? And how has either House shown that it has any talent for war?

The Duke of Richmond does not guess whither the Brest fleet is gone. He thinks, if to Ireland, we should have known it by this time. He has heard that the Prince of Beauveau has said he was going on an expedition that would be glorious in the eyes of posterity. I asked if that might not mean Gibraltar? The Duke doubts, but hopes it, as he thinks it no wise measure on their side; yet he was very melancholy, as you will be, on this heavy accession to our distresses.

Well! here we are, *aris et focis* and all at stake! What can we be meaning? Unable to conquer America before she was assisted—scarce able to keep France at bay—are we a match for both, and Spain too? What can be our view? nay, what can be our expectation? I sometimes think we reckon it will be more creditable to be forced by France and Spain to give up America, than to have the merit with the latter of doing it with grace.—But, as Cato says,

> I'm weary of conjectures—this must end them;

that is, the sword:—and never, I believe, did a country

plunge itself into such difficulties step by step, and for six years together, without once recollecting that each foreign war rendered the object of the civil war more unattainable; and that in both the foreign wars we have not an object in prospect. Unable to recruit our remnant of an army in America, are we to make conquests on France and Spain? They may choose their attacks: we can scarce choose what we will defend.

Ireland, they say, is more temperate than was expected. That is some consolation—yet many fear the Irish will be tempted to unite with America, which would throw all that trade into their convenient harbours: and I own I have apprehensions that the Parliament's rising without taking a step in their favour may offend them. Surely at least we have courageous ministers. I thought my father a stout man:—he had not a tithe of their spirit.

The town has wound up the season perfectly in character by a fête at the Pantheon by subscription. Le Texier managed it; but it turned out sadly. The company was first shut into the galleries to look down on the supper, then let to descend to it. Afterwards they were led into the subterraneous apartment, which was laid with mould, and planted with trees, and crammed with nosegays: but the fresh earth, and the dead leaves, and the effluvia of breaths made such a stench and moisture, that they were suffocated; and when they remounted, the legs and wings of chickens and remnants of ham (for the supper was not removed) poisoned them more. A Druid in an arbour distributed verses to the ladies; then the Baccelli and the dancers of the Opera danced; and then danced the company; and then it being morning, and the candles burnt out, the windows were opened; and then the stewed-danced assembly were such shocking figures, that they fled like ghosts as they looked.—I suppose there will be no more balls unless

Benjamin Franklin
from a medallion by J. B. Nini.

Walker & Cockerell Ph. Sc.

the French land, and then we shall show we do not mind it.

Thus I have told you all I know. You will ponder over these things in your little distant island, when we have forgotten them. There is another person, one Dr. Franklin, who, I fancy, is not sorry that we divert ourselves so well.

1949. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, June 16, 1779.

Alas! my dear Sir, you have been mistaken, and must no more put your trust in the obstinacy of princes: at least, that of one can surmount that of another. The King of Spain's rescript is arrived and delivered, and the Brest fleet is sailed with both white and red cockades. The declaration is said not to be very injurious; but, after all possible endeavours at pacification, his Catholic Majesty is obliged to take his part, especially as we have made some captures on his subjects. The ministers were urged even late last night on the hostility of Spain, but would own nothing. This morning they avow everything; and, to your great surprise probably, the Parliament is to rise to-morrow or next day! As events have not proved the wisdom of measures, one can collect no great confidence from such a step: but I don't pretend to reason on what I do not understand; my business is to tell you facts. In short, the Brest fleet has been sailed many days. The Prince of Beauvau is on board[1]—if destined for Ireland, we should probably have heard it by this time; if to meet the Spanish fleet, the object may be Gibraltar.

I shall not boast of having been a better soothsayer than you, when I foretold that the American war would not be of short duration. It is a trist honour to be verified a

Letter 1949.—[1] He did not go. *Walpole.*

prophet of woes. Were I vain of the character, a Spanish war, added to an American and to a French one, were a fine field; but I do not ambition being a Jeremiah, though my countrymen are so like the Jews. Nor does it require inspiration to prophesy, when one has nothing to do but to calculate. Were you here, you would not be alarmed. You would see no panic; you would hear of nothing but diversions. The ministers affirm the majority of America is with us, and it is credited. Were they to tell us half the Spanish fleet would come over to us, it would be credited too. When it does not, perhaps they will tell us it has.—Well! what is most to be dreaded is the dissipation of our delusion. When the *reveil* comes, it will be serious indeed!

You see I am not likely to be barren of matter, and you will be sorry that I write oftener than I foresaw. The middle period of our correspondence was the most agreeable. Its early part was the journal of a civil war, and of no glorious one in Flanders. Fifteen years after, I sent you victory upon victory, and conquest upon conquest. For the last five years, my letters have been the records of a mouldering empire. What is now to come I know not: we have, they say, maintained ourselves against France and Spain; true, but with the trifling difference of having America in our scale—now it is in theirs. We had too a Lord Chatham; who does not seem to have been replaced.

I tell you nothing of Parliamentary debates, for I really do not attend to them; especially not to the details of the war, and the conduct of the generals, who have made a very silly figure. There are far mightier objects in question than speeches and votes, and which I *must* learn even here, quiet and abstracted as I sit. My consolation is that I have no particular friend responsible for anything that has happened; and, when one's passions are not concerned, an individual of my age must have learnt to look

on the great drama of the world with some indifference. My pride, I own, made me pleased when my country was the most splendid in Europe: I did not imagine I was so singular as I find I was, or we should not have run wild after a phantom of absolute power over a country whose liberty was the source of our greatness. A pretty experiment we have made; and, whenever the hour of peace shall arrive, we shall be able to compute what it has cost us *not* to compass it.

Methinks, if the accounts of all wars were to be stated, it would be worth ambition's while to examine the sum total, and calculate whether the object aimed at is not ten thousand times too dear. I doubt I must not propose examining beyond the mere *cash* account. The lives, alas! go for nothing. We have sent fifty thousand men to America, and recruits! How many will ever return? And where are all the children that would have been begotten in six years of peace? Oh, and now here is a new account to be opened!

These would be called at present the gloomy speculations of a solitary man. Posterity would think there was some sense in them—and yet posterity will perhaps be as foolish on some other point. We condemn the wars of the Guelfs and Ghibellines, and do not conceive what they quarrelled about; yet we, who are at war with France and Spain because we would not be content to let America send us half the wealth of the world in its own way, shall not be deemed very wise hereafter. We not only killed the hen that laid a golden egg every day, but must defend the very shop at home where we sold our eggs.—I have nothing more to say, and three parts of England do not yet think there is a word of sense in what I have said: France and Spain know there is; but I shall not canvass for their approbation.

1950. To Sir Horace Mann.

Dear Sir, Strawberry Hill, June 19, 1779.

I cannot persuade my cousin, Mr. Thomas Walpole, that his request would be sufficient to recommend to your kindest protection Mr. Edmund Turnor, a friend of his son. I have told him, and he knows, how obliging you are to all English, and that his name would double your attention. Still he will insist on my joining in the application. I do it with the greatest pleasure, and love young Mr. Walpole so much, and am so sure that a friend of his must be a valuable young man, that I boldly venture to assure you that your warmest civilities will be well bestowed. My young cousin is so amiable that it will be obliging me very particularly to oblige his friend; and I never doubt your seizing any opportunity of pleasing

Your very affectionate friend
and obedient servant,
H. W.

1951. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Strawberry Hill, June 22, 1779.

Your Ladyship's reproaches would be very just, if my pleas of excuse were not too valid. I have been in town but one half day since I had the honour of seeing you; and my own pastime is too insipid to send you. I have a more weighty apology too to urge, which increases every day, and which I will give you in the moving words of one, almost my contemporary, Dan Lydgate, who in his last piece complains of his trembling joints, and declares that age

Letter 1950.—Not in C.; now first printed from transcript in possession of Earl Waldegrave.

having benumbed his faculties, had deprived him of *all the subtyltè of curious makyng in Englysshe to endytc.*

You will think me torpid indeed, Madam, when I tell you that I have not set my foot in London ever since the delivery of the Spanish Ambassador's sour rescript.

In truth, I concluded the eruption of a third war would call Lord Ossory to town ; and then I knew your Ladyship would have more authentic intelligence than I could send you by rebound.

The ruin of my country is certainly no matter of joy to me. Perhaps I have long thought it undone ; and then one may be allowed to prefer one mode to another. A nation cannot perish entirely. Foreign enemies seldom destroy a country, and then only by total conquest. In my opinion the subversion of a happy constitution, which is only effected by domestic enemies, is a worse evil, certainly a more permanent and more mortifying one, than defeats by strangers. If calamities restore the spirit of our constitution, which had exalted us from a little trading island to the rank of a great empire, we may be a mighty people once more ; for it is liberty alone, not titular authority and prerogative, that can aggrandize small countries. If we will be emperors, it will be without empire. The majesty of the people of England was no joke—for they maintained their dignity ; but a Grand Seignior of this diminutive islet, without its trade, which is never an appendage of despotism, would be crushed amidst the real potentates that now exist in Europe ; and two of their Majesties seem to think the hour is come for sweeping us from the roll of monarchs.

These are not professions, but have always been my opinions, Madam. I think the national character lost, or we should not be where we are at this moment, trusting to precedents of former miracles for preservation ; but miracles

are not such matters of chance, as to contradict calculation. Only Turks believe that fools are inspired. If Providence interposes its Omnipotence in politics, at least it selects wise men for its agents; or if not wise men, a genius. I sit here, waiting till the star appears that is to conduct those sages. I know not from what quarter, east, west, or south, they are to come. I am sure they have not set out from the north. My utmost wish, not my expectance, is to live to see my country escape tolerably from this menacing darkness. I am too inconsiderable to give advice, and too old to contribute anything else; and therefore sit silently here awaiting the working of the tempest: shipwreck or miracles are soon learnt anywhere.

I have wandered beyond my intention, but you set my pen a prating, though I have told it I will have it hold its tongue. My private story is very brief. My health is much better for quiet and total idleness, and my fevers gone. Lady Aylesbury and Lady William Campbell passed one night here, and last week the Duke of Richmond and the Duchess of Leinster dined with me. On Friday I dined at Princess Amelie's, and was so unfortunate, to my confusion, as to arrive after she was set down to table, but as her Royal Highness had a great cold, I took occasion to go and inquire after her the next day, and made my submission. There were the Duchess of Bedford, their Ladyships Aylesbury, Holdernesse, Mary Coke, Margaret Compton, Anne Howard, Betty Delmé [1], Mrs. Howe, Lords Hertford and Dillon, Lords Pelham and Edgcumbe, and their wives, and Mr. Morrice, who looked dreadfully ill indeed.

I hear Lord Carlisle has resigned [2], and conjecture why; and that Lord Shelburne is going to be married—perhaps

Letter 1951.—[1] Lady Elizabeth Howard (d. 1813), third daughter of fourth Earl of Carlisle by his second wife; m. (1) Peter Delmé; (2) Captain Garnier.

[2] He resigned his post as Treasurer of the Household in July 1779, when he was appointed Lord Steward.

your Ladyship knows to whom: unless you tell me to the contrary, I shall be very glad.

Shall I make you smile, Madam, in this ugly hour? You know my Swiss David's solemnity and uncouth pronunciation, which he thinks perfect. He came into my room t'other day very composedly, and dangling his arms said, 'Auh! dar is Meses Ellis want some of your large flags to put in her great O.'—I cried, 'What!' though I could scarce question him for laughing. At last with much ado I discovered that Mrs. Ellis's wants lay in her grotto.

That beautiful spot, Mr. Hindley's[3], is to be sold by auction next Monday. I hear Mrs. Coke[4], the mother of him of Norfolk, intends to be the purchaser—and I hope so: for I do not know her, which is a good circumstance in a next neighbourhood; and a dowager is a quiet sort of neighbour, and don't keep hounds. I pray for the peace of my little Jerusalem, since I have long been cured of having any other object.

Wednesday noon.

I had sealed my letter for the post, when I received your Ladyship's second, for which I give you a million of thanks. I am delighted with the confirmation of Lady Louisa's[5] match. My acquaintance with Lord Shelburne is very slight; but two essential points are gospel, that he is a man of sense, and that he made an excellent husband to a wife far inferior to Lady Louisa in beauty. There is a third, which though negative, I reckon a capital merit at present, he is not a gamester.

George Selwyn is suddenly returned, and as Lord Ossory is in town too, I think I shall go to town to-morrow.

[3] A former steward of the last Earl of Radnor of the Robarts family, who left him his house and furniture at Twickenham.

[4] Elizabeth, daughter of George Denton, and widow of Wenman Coke (formerly Roberts), of Longford, Derbyshire.

[5] Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick.

1952. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, June 30, 1779.

This letter will be of very ancient date when you receive it, and not have one very near it perhaps when it sets out. Your nephew called here two days ago, just as I was going to town on business, and told me, to my joy on your account, that he was going in a fortnight to make you another short visit—a very meritorious one when the journey is so long. He has promised to come and dine here *tête à tête* before he goes; but, lest he should surprise me, I prepare this, which therefore shall not contain news that would be antiquated, but give you as just a picture as I can in few words of our situation and prospect, and as impartial one as I can, considering my indignation at the ruin brought upon my country by both as worthless and incapable a set of men as ever had the front to call themselves politicians. They have hurried us, and then blundered us, into a civil war, a French war, a Spanish war. America is lost; Jamaica, the West Indian islands, Gibraltar, and Port Mahon, are scarce to be saved; Ireland is in great danger, either from invasion or provocation.

Of this country I should have little fear, if men who have conducted themselves so wretchedly were not still our governors! We are at this instant expecting a sea-battle between our fleet and the united one of France and Spain; in which, if the latter, who are the stronger by a matter of nine ships, have the decided advantage, we conclude they will pour in troops, considerably into Ireland,—here probably in less detachments, to distract us. The nation is not so much alarmed as might be expected. What is infinitely more astonishing is, that the Spanish war, on which the ministers lulled the country asleep even *till*

two days before the declaration, has not excited general, scarce any, indignation against the criminals. In short, the court, aided by the Tories and clergy, the worst Tories, have infatuated the nation; and though the opposition have yearly, daily, hourly, laboured to prevent, and foretold every individual step that has happened, the money of the Treasury, the industry of the Scotch, and the rancour of the Tories have persuaded the majority of the people that the opposition have almost conjured up the storm; though they have not been strong enough to carry a single question, have deprecated every measure pursued, and have had every one of their prophecies verified.—I, who affirm all this, and appeal to facts, am still not partial to the opposition. So far from thinking they have gone too far, I know they have been too inert, and, early at least in the American war, might have stemmed some of the torrent. Yet I will do them justice,—the fairness of their characters checked them; a less conscientious opposition might have saved the nation.

In this predicament then we stand; a good man scarce knows what to wish. New misfortunes would level us to the dust. Success in such hands as we are in would blow them up to the acme of insolence; and, as the whole scope of all our errors was despotism, it is greatly to be feared that, with the loss of our outlying dominions, our trade, influence, and credit, we might lose our freedom too.

There is the true secret. Prerogative has been whispered into the nation's ear, and taken root. The Tories scruple not to call for it. The ministers, worthless and incapable wretches, and ill-connected with each other, and cohering but from common danger, have little or no credit with their master; and, no one being predominant, no particular odium rests on any one. Thus, though I am persuaded almost every one condemns the measures he promotes, and

must have foreseen the precipice, not one has had the honest courage to withstand the Spanish war; which I firmly believe was by no means the Spanish King's intention, but turned solely on the refusal of the closet to relinquish American dependence. Everything has been risked rather than waive prerogative; and so abandoned are the higher orders, that, for the emolument of salaries, they have staked their children and the future security of their estates!

Our late prodigious wealth, and our dissipation, have concurred to facilitate this delusion. We have excellent orators both in the administration and opposition, but no great man; and few, very few, virtuous men, even in the latter; who, though impudently charged still with acting from interested motives, have over and over rejected every offer of advantage. I mean, personally. Anything would have been granted to divide them. You will say good sense, not integrity, checked their acceptance. Perhaps so: yet as the court would never have changed its system, nor would part with the lead, it is plain the opposition did not attend to individual lucre, as every minister had been gained by it. I believe that neither Lord Rockingham nor Lord Shelburne would be content without being First Minister; but honesty must have been the motive of the rest.

This, though short, is a comprehensive abstract of my ideas on our situation. I cannot precisely say what I wish; because I cannot decide between contradictions, nor can expect that miracles should *dovetail* themselves in such a manner, as, by intersecting one another, to form a compact establishment that I should like. Thus my fears and hopes are suspended, and I sit with folded arms waiting events. It would be idle and impertinent to say this but to you, my dear Sir, who wish to know my opinion, when

I could speak it fairly and truly. I have done so most religiously; I firmly believe every tittle I have uttered. Never have I deceived you knowingly. I mean, when I have written by a safe hand—by the post, one colours over some things, even because one's letters may be opened by foreign enemies; but I have ever been rather too frank for my own interest, and have never talked seriously contrary to my opinion, though I may not have uttered it fully. I wish you to return me this letter by your nephew: it is too explicit to be exposed to any hazard of publication, and is impartial enough to please no set of men upon earth.

Pray send me back by your nephew what other letters, too, you have of mine. On perusing the whole series, I can safely repeat, that, as far as I knew at the time, I have never given you false information, nor acted sentiments which you afterwards found had not been mine; but, as my life has been uniform to its first and only principles, it was not likely that I should go farther than being prudent (not the colour of my character), and, had I talked differently, my conduct at the very time would have contradicted my assertions.

1953. To George Hardinge.

Strawberry Hill, July 4, 1779.

I have now received the drawings of Grignan, and know not how to express my satisfaction and gratitude but by a silly witticism that is like the studied quaintness of the last age. In short, they are so much more beautiful than I expected, that I am *not* surprised at *your* having surprised me by exceeding even what I expected from your well-known kindness to me.

They are charmingly executed, and with great taste. I own too that Grignan is grander, and in a much finer

situation, than I had imagined; as I concluded that the witchery of Madame de Sévigné's ideas and style had spread the same leaf-gold over *places* with which she gilded her *friends*.

All that has appeared of *them* since the publication of her letters has lowered them. A single letter of her daughter, that to Paulina[1], with a description of the Duchess of Bourbon's toilette, is worthy of the mother. Paulina's own letters contain not a tittle worth reading; one just divines that she might have written well if she had had anything to write about (which, however, would not have signified to her grandmother).

Coulanges was a silly good-humoured glutton, that flattered a rich widow for her dinners. His wife was sensible, but dry, and rather peevish at growing old. Unluckily nothing more has come to light of Madame de Sévigné's son, whose short letters in the collection I am almost *profane* enough to prefer to his mother's; and which makes me astonished that she did not love his wit, so unaffected, and so congenial to her own, in preference to the eccentric and sophisticated reveries of her sublime and ill-humoured daughter. Grignan alone maintains its dignity, and shall be consecrated here among other monuments of that bewitching period, and amongst which one loves to lose oneself, and drink oblivion of an era so very unlike; for the awkward bigots to despotism of our time have not Madame de Sévigné's address, nor can paint an Indian idol with an hundred hands as graceful as the Apollo of the Belvidere.

When will you come and accept my thanks? Will Wednesday next suit you? But do you know that I must ask you not to leave your gown behind you, which indeed

Letter 1953.—[1] The Marquise de Simiane, grand-daughter of Madame de Sévigné.

I never knew you put on willingly, but to come in it. I shall want your protection at Westminster Hall against the Bishops[2], an odious race whether clerical or laic. You heard how infamously I had been treated by Colonel and by Ned Bishop. Oh, they could not be worse if they were in orders.

Yours most cordially,
H. Walpole.

1954. To George Augustus Selwyn.

Strawberry Hill, July 5, 1779.

I take the liberty, which I know you will forgive me, my dear Sir, of troubling you with the enclosed, begging that you will add anything that is necessary to the direction, —as *par la Hollande*, or whatever else is requisite,—and to put it into the post as soon as you receive it. Pray tell me, too, what is necessary to the direction, and where my maid in town must put in my future letters to Paris, that I may not trouble you any more with them. I fear they will not go so safely and regularly as in the old way, which will vex our good old friend[1], who cannot bear to lose any of her stated occupations.

I have just received a present of four beautiful drawings of Grignan, which far exceed my ideas of its magnificence and charming situation. I had concluded that Madame de Sévigné, either from partiality or to please the Seigneur, had exaggerated its pomps and command. I long to show them to you and talk them over, and am glad to have anything new that may tempt you hither. Can you tell me if the Duchess of Leinster still goes to Aubigny; and, if she

[2] Horace Walpole had a lawsuit with the Bisshops, in connection with his house in Berkeley Square.

Letter 1954.—Collated with copy of original in possession of the Duchess of St. Albans.

[1] Madame du Deffand.

does, when; and if she is in London? I shall be much obliged to you for a true account of Lord Bolingbroke. It is not common curiosity that makes me anxious, though not particularly interested about him, nor is he *the husband*[2] I most wish dead.

Yours most sincerely,
H. W.

1955. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Bedfordshire, July 6, 1779.

I should not have waited to owe you a letter, Madam, had I not had a substantial reason for silence. I had the gout in my foot for two days at the beginning of last week: it went off at once, but at night came into my left eye; and remained there for four or five days. To what part Old Truepenny, like the ghost in *Hamlet*, will shift its quarters next, I cannot tell; but I see it will never quit me till it makes a ghost of Horatio. In the meantime it lays such an embargo on me that I never dare engage myself, or promise anything that I am to perform personally, lest I seem capricious; but I am so much worse company than usual, when I am not well, and struggle to hide it, that I determine never to bind myself for a minute but conditionally.

I have done talking politics, Madam, as I should if I lived at the foot of Vesuvius and the mountain grumbled. If the lava takes a contrary direction, and my cottage escapes, I will look about me and see what is left. How can you mind what passes in Parliament? The vestry at

[2] The *husband* is doubtless Topham Beauclerk, who married Lord Bolingbroke's divorced wife. Lady Louisa Stuart, in a note on the Selwyn Correspondence, writes of him as follows:—'In the latter part of Mr. Beauclerk's life, the man of pleasure grew morose and savage, and Lady Di had much to suffer from his temper; so had his children, to whom he was a selfish tyrant without indulgence or affection.' (*Journal of Lady Mary Coke*, vol. ii. p. 212 *n.*)

Ampthill is of as much consequence. Nothing happens there but contradictions. I observe the Speech gives the lie to all the late assertions of hopes in America, of which it speaks dolefully. I do not think your neighbour so much in the wrong in apprehending a rebellion if Lord North was turned out. The nation would be consequent in resenting it; in short, I believe I am really Xo Ho, a Chinese that comprehends nothing he sees or hears.

Pray let me know when you come to your wedding[1], that I may get a peep of you. Of weddings in my own tribe I am as tired as of politics and have put cotton into all my ears. Be the events of Empress Chance obeyed; nobody but her majesty has any decision. I leave everything to her, have abandoned all my principles, and am governed by nothing but *De par la Reine.*

George[2] I have seen. He embarked in an instant on receiving a warrant to carry off his prize, as if she had been the heiress of the Indies and he had feared a retractation. I did not ask to see her. Would you ask to see the moon, if Endymion told you he had married her?

Lord Bolingbroke, I hear, will live. At first they thought he had taken laudanum. It would have been a monstrous injustice in opium to kill him, when it will not dispatch Beauclerk.

In my neighbourhood there is no talk of the fleets. All we think of is the new tax on post-horses, which they say will produce more disturbances than the ballot for the militia would have done, and a million of broken heads.

I suppose that was the object (as it seems to be of all our measures), and that as the demand for plasters will be

LETTER 1955.—[1] The wedding of the Earl of Shelburne and Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick.

[2] George Selwyn. He had just returned from Paris, bringing Maria Fagniani (the 'prize' mentioned by Walpole), who had been given over to him by the Marquis and Marchioness Fagniani.

infinitely increased, it may furnish pretext for a heavy gabel on diachylum. Adieu! Madam, if we are digged out alive, when the conflagration is over, we will chat over old times. I do not desire to embark like Pliny, and probe the nature of earthquakes.

P.S. Harold, my venerable cat that was found on the Goodwin Sands, fifteen years ago or more, died last night in a good old age. I am not grieved, for I have not strength to have carried him out of Troy like Anchises on my shoulders.

1956. To Sir Horace Mann.

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1779.

How much larger the war will be for the addition of Spain, I do not know. Hitherto it has produced no events but the shutting of our ports against France, and the junction of nine ships from Ferrol with the French squadron. They talk of a great navy getting ready at Cadiz, and of mighty preparations in the ports of France for an embarkation. As all this must have been foreseen, I suppose we are ready to resist all attacks.

The Parliament rose last Saturday, not without an open division in the ministry: Lord Gower, President of the Council, heading an opposition to a bill for doubling the militia, which had passed the Commons, and throwing it out; which Lord North as publicly resented. I make no comments on this, because I really know nothing of the motives. Thoroughly convinced that all my ideas are superannuated, and too old to learn new lessons, I only hear what passes, pretend to understanding nothing, and wait patiently for events as they present themselves. I listen enough to be able to acquaint you with facts of

public notoriety; but attempt to explain none of them, if they do not carry legibility in the van.

Your nephew, who lives more in the world, and is coming to you, will be far more master of details. He called here some few days ago, as I was going out to dinner, but has kindly promised to come and dine here before he sets out. His journey is infinitely commendable, as entirely undertaken to please you. It will be very comfortable too, as surely the concourse of English must much abate, especially as France is interdicted. Travelling boys and self-sufficient governors would be an encumbrance to you, could you see more of your countrymen of more satisfactory conversation. Florence probably is improved since it had a court of its own, and there must be men a little more enlightened than the poor Italians. Scarce any of the latter that ever I knew but, if they had parts, were buffoons. I believe the boasted *finesse* of the ruling clergy is pretty much a traditionary notion, like their jealousy. More nations than one live on former characters after they are totally changed.

I have been often and much in France. In the provinces they may still be gay and lively; but at Paris, bating the pert *étourderie* of very young men, I protest I scarcely ever saw anything like vivacity—the Duc de Choiseul alone had more than any hundred Frenchmen I could select. Their women are the first in the world in everything but beauty; sensible, agreeable, and infinitely informed. The *philosophes*, except Buffon, are solemn, arrogant, dictatorial coxcombs—I need not say superlatively disagreeable. The rest are amazingly ignorant in general, and void of all conversation but the routine with women. My dear and very old friend is a relic of a better age, and at near eighty-four has all the impetuosity that *was* the character of the French. They have not found out, I believe, how much

their nation is sunk in Europe;—probably the Goths and Vandals of the North will open their eyes before a century is past. I speak of the swarming empires that have conglomerated within our memories. *We* dispelled the vision twenty years ago: but let us be modest till we do so again.

I just now receive two letters from you at once, which I suppose came by Mrs. Pitt's messenger, with Sir William Hamilton's assurances of the good disposition of the King of Spain: but they have proved as vain as the letters to the Grand-Duchess; yet I still think we might have kept him in temper if we had so pleased.

9th.

The Duke of Ancaster[1] is dead of a scarlet fever contracted by drinking and rioting, at two-and-twenty. He was in love with my niece Lady Horatia, the Duchess's third daughter, and I believe intended to marry her. She is a beautiful girl, like her mother, though not of so sublime a style of beauty. I much doubt whether she would have been happy with him; for, though he had some excellent qualities, he was of a turbulent nature, and, though of a fine figure, his manners were not noble. Fortune seems to have removed him, to complete her magnificent bounties to one family. Do you remember old Peter Burrell, who was attached to my father? His eldest grand-daughter is married to a Mr. Bennet[2], a man of large estate; the second, to Lord Algernon Percy; the third, to Lord Percy; and the youngest, the only one at all pretty, to Duke Hamilton. Lady Priscilla Elizabeth Bertie, eldest sister of the Duke of Ancaster, fell in love with, and would marry, their brother, not at all at his desire; but her father had entailed his whole estate on his two daughters,

LETTER 1956. — [1] Robert Bertie (1756–1778), fourth Duke of Ancaster. [2] Richard Henry Alexander Bennett, of Babraham, Cambridgeshire.

after his son, to the total disinherison of his brother Lord Brownlowe[3], the present Duke;—and the grandson of Peter Burrell, a broken merchant, is husband of the Lady Great Chamberlain of England, with a barony and half the Ancaster estate. Old Madam Peter is living, to behold all this deluge of wealth and honours on her race. The Duchesses of Ancaster have not been less singular. The three last were never sober. The present Duchess-Dowager was natural daughter of Panton, a disreputable horse-jockey of Newmarket; and the new Duchess[4] was some lady's woman, or young lady's governess. Fortune was in her most jocular moods when she made all these matches, or had a mind to torment the Heralds' Office.

11th.

Last night I received from town the medal you promised me on the Moorish alliance[5]. It is at least as magnificent as the occasion required, and yet not well executed. The medallist Siriez[6], I conclude, is grandson of my old acquaintance Louis Siriez of the Palazzo Vecchio.

Yesterday's *Gazette* issued a proclamation on the expected invasion from Havre, where they are embarking mightily. Some think the attempt will be on Portsmouth. To sweeten this pill, Clinton has taken a fort and seventy men—not near Portsmouth, but New York; and there were reports at the latter that Charleston is likely to surrender. This would be something, if there were not a French war and a Spanish war in the way between us and Carolina. Sir Charles Hardy[7] is at Torbay with the

[3] Lord Brownlow Bertie (1729–1809), fifth Duke of Ancaster, third son of second Duke of Ancaster.

[4] Mary Anne (d. 1804), daughter of Major Peter Layard; m. (1769), as his second wife, Lord Brownlow Bertie, afterwards Duke of Ancaster.

[5] Between the Great Duke of Tuscany and the Emperor of Morocco. *Walpole.*

[6] A French silversmith settled at Florence. *Walpole.*

[7] Admiral Sir Charles Hardy, Knight (d. 1780), at this time in command of the Channel fleet.

whole fleet, which perhaps was not part of the plan at Havre: we shall see, and you shall hear, if anything passes.

Friday night, July 16th.

Your nephew has sent me word that he will breakfast with me to-morrow, but shall not have time to dine. I have nothing to add to the foregoing general picture. We have been bidden even by proclamation to expect an invasion, and troops and provisions have for this week been said to be embarked. Still I do not much expect a serious descent. The French, I think, have better chances with less risk. They may ruin us in detail. The fleet is at present at home or very near, and very strong; nor do I think that the French plan is activity:—but it is idle to talk of the present moment, when it will be some time before you receive this. I am infinitely in more pain about Mr. Conway, who is in the midst of the storm in a nutshell, and I know will defend himself as if he was in the strongest fortification in Flanders—and, which is as bad, I believe the court would sacrifice the island[8] to sacrifice him. They played that infamous game last year on Keppel, when ten thousand times more was at stake. They look at the biggest objects through the diminishing end of every telescope; and, the higher they who look, the more malignant and mean the eye.

I send you *The Mysterious Mother*, and a pair of bootikins; you shall have large supplies if they prove of service—yet I would not have you even try them, unless attacked in your head or stomach. You can never have much gout in your limbs, as it attacks you so late, and little fits will prolong your life. You must put them on at night and tie them as tight as you can bear, the flannel next to your flesh, the oilskin over. In the morning before you rise,

[8] Jersey.

you must dry your feet with a hot napkin, and put on a pair of warm stockings fresh aired; over the bootikins at night, a pair of thread stockings.

The Duchess-Dowager of Ancaster, Lady Elizabeth Burrell, and the new Duke and Duchess, have all written to Lady Horatia, acknowledging that the late Duke was to have married her. The two first have expressed themselves in the tenderest manner; the others wrote only for form. The mother Duchess approves of my niece going into mourning, which she does for six months. The poor young man, his father's absurd will not standing good, made a new and most rational one four years ago, in which he gives the seat of the family[9] and 5,000*l.* to the present Duke and to the title, and adds 1,800*l.* a year to his mother's jointure. Such symptoms of sense and feeling double the loss.

Adieu! my dear Sir. In what manner we are to be undone, I do not guess; but I see no way by which we can escape happily out of this crisis—I mean, preserving the country and recovering the constitution. I thought for four years that calamity would bring us to our senses: but alas! we have none left to be brought to. We shall now suffer a great deal, submit at last to a humiliating peace, and people will be content.—So adieu, England! it will be more or less a province or kind of province to France, and its viceroy will be, in what does not concern France, its despot—and will be content too! I shall not pity the country: I shall feel only for those who grieve with me at its abject state; or for posterity, if they do not, like other degraded nations, grow callously reconciled to their ignominy.

[9] Grimsthorpe, in Lincolnshire.

1957. To the Countess of Ailesbury.

Saturday night, July 10, 1779.

I could not thank your Ladyship before the post went out to-day, as I was getting into my chaise to go and dine at Carshalton with my cousin Thomas Walpole when I received your kind inquiry about my eye. It is quite well again, and I hope the next attack of the gout will be anywhere rather than in that quarter.

I did not expect Mr. Conway would think of returning just now. As you have lost both Mrs. Damer and Lady William Campbell, I do not see why your Ladyship should not go to Goodwood.

The Baroness's [1] increasing peevishness does not surprise me. When people will not weed their own minds, they are apt to be overrun with nettles. She knows nothing of politics, and no wonder talks nonsense about them. It is silly to wish three nations had but one neck; but it is ten times more absurd to act as if it was so, which the government has done;—ay, and forgetting too, that it has not a scimitar large enough to sever that neck, which they have in effect made *one*. It is past the time, Madam, of making conjectures. How can one guess whither France and Spain will direct a blow that is in their option? I am rather inclined to think that they will have patience to ruin us in detail. Hitherto France and America have carried their points by that manœuvre. Should there be an engagement at sea, and the French and Spanish fleets, by their great superiority, have the advantage, one knows not what might happen. Yet, though there are such large preparations making on the French coast, I do not much expect a serious invasion, as they are sure they can do us more damage by

Letter 1957.—[1] Probably Lady Greenwich.

a variety of other attacks, where we can make little resistance. Gibraltar and Jamaica can but be the immediate objects of Spain. Ireland is much worse guarded than this island:—nay, we must be undone by our expense, should the summer pass without any attempt. My cousin thinks they will try to destroy Portsmouth and Plymouth—but I have seen nothing in the present French ministry that looks like bold enterprise. We are much more adventurous, that set everything to the hazard; but there are such numbers of *baronesses* that both talk and act with passion, that one would think the nation had lost its senses.

Everything has miscarried that has been undertaken, and the worse we succeed, the more is risked;—yet the nation is not angry! How can one conjecture during such a delirium? I sometimes almost think I must be in the wrong to be of so contrary an opinion to most men—yet, when every misfortune that has happened had been foretold by a few, why should I not think I have been in the right? Has not almost every single event that has been announced as prosperous proved a gross falsehood, and often a silly one? Are we not at this moment assured that Washington cannot possibly amass an army of above 8,000 men! and yet Clinton, with 20,000 men, and with the hearts, as we are told, too, of three parts of the colonies, dares not show his teeth without the walls of New York? Can I be in the wrong in not believing what is so contradictory to my senses? We could not conquer America when it stood alone; then France supported it, and we did not mend the matter. To make it still easier, we have driven Spain into the alliance. Is this wisdom? Would it be presumption, even if one were single, to think that we must have the worst in such a contest? Shall I be like the mob, and expect to conquer France and Spain, and then thunder

upon America? Nay, but the higher mob do not expect such success. They would not be so angry at the house of Bourbon, if not morally certain that those kings destroy all our passionate desire and expectation of conquering America. We bullied, and threatened, and begged, and nothing would do. Yet independence was still the word. Now we rail at the two monarchs—and when they have banged us, we shall sue to them as humbly as we did to the Congress. All this my senses, such as they are, tell me has been and will be the case. What is worse, all Europe is of the same opinion; and though forty thousand *baronesses* may be ever so angry, I venture to prophesy that we shall make but a very foolish figure whenever we are so lucky as to obtain a peace; and posterity, that may have prejudices of its own, will still take the liberty to pronounce that its ancestors were a woful set of politicians from the year 1774 to—I wish I knew when.

If I might advise, I would recommend Mr. Burrell to command the fleet in the room of Sir Charles Hardy. The fortune of the Burrells is powerful enough to baffle calculation. Good night, Madam!

P.S. I have not written to Mr. Conway since this day sevennight, not having a teaspoonful of news to send him. I will beg your Ladyship to tell him so.

1958. To the Rev. William Cole.

Strawberry Hill, July 12, 1779.

I am concerned, dear Sir, that you gave yourself the trouble of transcribing the catalogue and prices, which I received last night, and for which I am exceedingly obliged to you.

Partial as I am to the pictures at Houghton, I confess

I think them much overvalued. My father's whole collection, of which alone he had preserved the prices, cost but forty thousand pounds; and after his death there were three sales of pictures, among which were all the whole-lengths of Vandyck but three, which had been sent to Houghton, but not fitting any of the spaces left, came back to town. Few of the rest sold were very fine: but no doubt Sir Robert had paid as dear for many of them; as purchasers are not perfect connoisseurs at first.

Many of the valuations are not only exorbitant, but injudicious. They who made the estimate seem to have considered the rarity of the hands more than the excellence. Three, 'the Magi Offering,' by Carlo Maratti, as it is called, and two, supposed Paul Veroneses, are very indifferent copies, yet all are roundly valued, and the first ridiculously. I do not doubt of another picture in the collection but 'the Last Supper,' by Raphael, and yet *that* is set down at 500*l.* I miss three pictures, at least that are not set down, the Sir Thomas Wharton, the Laud, and Gibbons[1]. The first is most capital. Yes, I recollect, I have had some doubts on the Laud, though the University of Oxford once offered 400*l.* for it—and if Queen Henrietta is by Vandyck, it is a very indifferent one. The affixing a higher value to the Pietro Cortona than to the octagon Guido[2] is most absurd—I have often gazed on the latter, and preferred it even to the 'Doctors[3].' In short, the appraisers were determined to consider what the Czarina *could* give, rather than what the pictures were really worth—I am glad she seems to think so, for I hear no more of the sale—it is not very wise in me still to concern myself, and at my age, about what I have so little interest in—it is still less wise to be

LETTER 1958.—[1] The portraits of Wharton and Laud by Vandyck, and that of Grinling Gibbons by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

[2] 'The Adoration of the Shepherds.'

[3] 'The Doctors of the Church,' by Guido.

anxious on trifles, when one's country is sinking. I do not know which is most mad, my nephew or our ministers—both the one and the others increase my veneration for the founder of Houghton!

I will not rob you of the prints you mention, dear Sir. One of them, at least, I know Mr. Pennant gave me. I do not admire him for his punctiliousness with you. Pray tell me the name of your glass-painter: I do not think I shall want him, but it is not impossible. Mr. Essex agreed with me, that Jarvis's windows for Oxford, after Sir Joshua Reynolds, will not succeed. Most of his colours are opaque, and their great beauty depending on a spot of light for sun or moon, is an imposition. When his paintings are exhibited at Charing Cross, all the rest of the room is darkened to relieve them. That cannot be done at New College; or if done, the chapel would be too dark. If there is other light, the effect will be lost.

This sultry weather, I hope, will quite restore you. People need not go to Lisbon and Naples, if we continue to have such summers.

Yours most sincerely,
H. Walpole.

1959. To the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Arlington Street, July 14, 1779.

To show your Ladyship that I do not always wait for provocatives, I begin a letter to-night, without well knowing what it is to contain. I came to town this morning about my house in Berkeley Square, of which at last I begin to have hopes, though I am in Chancery for it; but it is by a mode of my own. I have persisted in complimenting and flattering my parties, till by dint of complaisance and respect I have brought them to pique themselves on equal

attentions; so that instead of a law-suit it has more the air of a treaty between two little German princes who are mimicking their betters only to display their titular dignities. His Serene Highness, Colonel Bisshopp, is the most obsequious and devoted servant of my Serenity the Landgrave of Strawberry.

His Royal Highness of Sion[1], who is Lord Paramount of Strawberry, has acquainted the College of Electors of Westminster that they are to be invaded by the French forthwith, and has subscribed 2,000*l.* for the defence of his Palatinate. Governor Johnstone is said to be gone to destroy the embarkation: I hope he will do it as completely as he has demolished his own character. The town does not seem to be much alarmed, and the courageous stocks don't value it a fraction; so it does not become us poor little princes to be more frightened than our superiors.

I met Miss Wrottesley this evening at my niece Cholmondeley's, and she told me Mr. Dunning has found a flaw in the settlements, and that they must be drawn again.

Are not you sorry, Madam, for the poor Duke of Ancaster, especially since he made so noble and sensible a will? I think his attention to his mother must half kill her. I hear he has left a legacy to a very small man that was always his companion, and whom, when he was drunk, he used to fling at the heads of the company, as others fling a bottle. Lord Bolingbroke, I suppose you know, is not dead.

Lady Jane Scott, to whom I made your Ladyship's compliments, has found in a cabinet at Ham a most enchanting picture in enamel by Zincke, of the Duchess of Queensberry, which the Duke always carried in his pocket. It is as simple as my Cowley, in white with the hair all flowing,

LETTER 1959. — [1] The Duke of Northumberland, Lord Lieutenant of Middlesex.

and beautiful as the Hours in Guido's 'Aurora,' and very like her to the last moment.

I dined on Saturday with my cousin, T. Walpole, at Carshalton, where, though so near London, I never was in my life. It is as rural a village as if in Northumberland, much watered with the clearest streams and buried in ancient trees of Scawen's Park, and the neighbouring Beddington.

I had long wished to see the latter, the seat of one of my ancestors, Sir Nicholas Carew, whose head, as he was Master of the Horse and Knight of the Garter, flew off in one of the moods of Henry VIII. Madam Bess, I think, often visited his son[2] there. It is an ugly place, with no prospect, a large very bad house, but it was burnt, rebuilt wretchedly after the Restoration, and never finished. Nothing remains of the ancient fabric but a brave old hall, with a pendent roof, copied by Wolsey at Hampton Court, a vast shield of arms and quarterings over the chimney, and two clumsy brazen andirons, which they told us had served Queen Elizabeth in the Tower, but look more as if they had served her for cannon to defend it. There is an almost effaced picture of Sir Nicholas, that seems to have been painted by Holbein, and for which, perished as it is, I longed.

I shall terminate this letter of scraps and nothings with a good epigram, which Mr. Jerningham gave me t'other day:

Ce Marmontel si lent, si long, si lourd,
Qui ne parle pas, mais qui beugle,
Juge la peinture en aveugle,
Et la musique comme un sourd.
Ce pedant à si sotte mine,
Et de ridicules bardé,
Dit qu'il a le secret des beaux vers de Racine —
Jamais secret ne fut si bien gardé.

[2] Sir Francis Carew, Knight. Queen Elizabeth visited him at Beddington Manor in August 1599.

The first line put me in mind of an excellent satiric epitaph on the General Lord Cadogan[3], of which I have forgotten all but the last couplet,—

Ungrateful to th' ungrateful man he grew by,
A bad, bold, blustering, bloody, blundering booby.

They were Bishop Atterbury's, who was glad to kill the Duke of Marlborough with the same stone.

1960. To the Countess of Ailesbury.

Strawberry Hill, Friday night, 1779.

I am not at all surprised, my dear Madam, at the intrepidity of Mrs. Damer[1]; she always was the heroic daughter of a hero. Her sense and coolness never forsake her. I, who am not so firm, shuddered at your Ladyship's account. Now that she has stood fire for four hours, I hope she will give as clear proofs of her understanding, of which I have as high opinion as of her courage, and not return in any danger.

I am to dine at Ditton[2] to-morrow, and will certainly talk on the subject you recommend; yet I am far, till I have heard more, from thinking with your Ladyship, that more troops and artillery at Jersey would be desirable. Any considerable quantity of either, especially of the former, cannot be spared at this moment, when so big a cloud hangs over this island, nor would any number avail if the French should be masters at sea. A large garrison would but tempt the French thither, were it but to distress this country; and, what is worse, would encourage Mr. Conway to make an impracticable defence. If he is to remain in a situation

[3] William Cadogan (1670–1726), first Earl Cadogan.

Letter 1960.—Wrongly placed by C. among letters of August 1779. (See *Notes and Queries*, July 7, 1900.)

[1] The packet in which she was crossing from Dover to Ostend had been captured by a French privateer.

[2] Thames Ditton, where Lord Hertford had at this time a country house.

so unworthy of him, I confess I had rather he was totally incapable of making any defence. I love him enough not to murmur at his exposing himself where his country and his honour demand him; but I would not have him measure himself in a place untenable against very superior force. My present comfort is, as to him, that France at this moment has a far vaster object. I have good reason to believe the government knows that a great army is ready to embark at St. Maloes, but will not stir till after a sea-fight, which we do not know but may be engaged at this moment. Our fleet is allowed to be the finest ever set forth by this country; but it is inferior in number by seventeen ships to the united squadron of the Bourbons. France, if successful, means to pour in a vast many thousands on us, and has threatened to burn the capital itself. Jersey, my dear Madam, does not enter into a calculation of such magnitude. The moment is singularly awful; yet the vaunts of enemies are rarely executed successfully and ably. Have we trampled America under our foot?

You have too good sense, Madam, to be imposed upon by my arguments, if they are insubstantial. You do know that I have had my terrors for Mr. Conway; but at present they are out of the question, from the insignificance of his island. Do not listen to rumours, nor believe a single one till it has been canvassed over and over. Fear, folly, fifty motives, will coin new reports every hour at such a conjuncture. When one is totally void of credit and power, patience is the only wisdom. I have seen dangers still more imminent. They were dispersed. Nothing happens in proportion to what is meditated. Fortune, whatever fortune is, is more constant than is the common notion. I do not give this as one of my solid arguments, but I have always encouraged myself in being superstitious on the favourable side. I never, like most superstitious people,

believe auguries against my wishes. We have been fortunate in the escape of Mrs. Damer, and in the defeat at Jersey, even before Mr. Conway arrived; and thence I depend on the same future prosperity. From the authority of persons who do not reason on such airy hopes, I am seriously persuaded, that if the fleets engage, the enemy will not gain advantage without deep-felt loss, enough, probably, to dismay their invasion. Coolness may succeed, and then negotiation. Surely, if we can weather the summer, we shall, obstinate as we are against conviction, be compelled, by the want of money, to relinquish our ridiculous pretensions, now proved to be utterly impracticable; for, with an inferior navy at home, can we assert sovereignty over America? It is a contradiction in terms and in fact. It may be hard of digestion to relinquish it, but it is impossible to pursue it. Adieu, my dear Madam! I have not left room for a line more.

END OF VOL. X

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